

**THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION ON THE
EMPOWERMENT OF DALIT WOMEN IN ANDHRA PRADESH, SOUTH INDIA**

by

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DECLARATION

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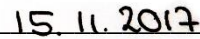
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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



SIGNATURE



DATE

ABSTRACT

Women are central to human development and yet, nowhere around the globe are they treated as equals to men. Although the need to empower them has been widely recognised, equality is not more than a theoretical construct and empowerment remains low, especially for female Dalits (the most disadvantaged social group in India). This study thus seeks to explore the impact of public secondary school education on the empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India. Twelve female Dalits were interviewed to better comprehend the effects of their educational experiences from their own perspective. Nine indicators for empowerment were used, among them decision making, social and physical mobility, choices surrounding sexuality and self-reported attitude changes. Findings showed a positive effect of education on empowerment, although deeply embedded social and patriarchal thought patterns were challenged only partly. The study suggests that education clearly needs to exceed primary schooling to result in empowerment.

Key Terms

Empowerment, Dalits, women, India, education, secondary schooling, Human Development, Capability Approach, caste discrimination, gender equality

“Even now I think that without education, how am I going to bring up my children? Without any job or education, how is it possible for me to take care of my family and children? [...] Without education, it's very difficult to come up in life. If there is no education, even to travel to a nearby town also is not possible, because to get into the right bus, we need to be educated.”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BMI	Body Mass Index
B.Sc.	Bachelor of Science
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
DV	Domestic Violence
EPC	Empirical Praxis Cycle
EW	Educated Women
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GT	Grounded Theory
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICMR	Indian Council of Medical Research
IDSN	International Dalit Solidarity Network
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IVC	Indus Valley Civilization
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIMS	National Institute of Medical Statistics

OBC	Other Backward Castes
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PhD	Doctoral Degree
RTE	Right to Education
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SUCHI	Social Unit for Community Health and Improvement (an Indian NGO)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children`s Fund
UW	Uneducated women
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
WID	Women in Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

While central notions around women's empowerment are relatively well established in academic literature, the opinions on school education as means to foster empowerment remain discordant. This applies especially to Dalit women. The interrelation of caste, class and gender with education has not received enough attention in current research. Hence, the extent to which education can help foster empowerment and may even lead to cracking the patriarchal social order, remains unclear. Using Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, this study explores the impact of public secondary school education on the lives and empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India.

1.2 Problem Statement

Women are central to human development and yet, nowhere around the globe are they treated as equals to men (UNDP 2015:69). The need to empower them has been widely identified as an essential element of sustainable development and extensive research suggests the benefits of empowering women - not only for themselves, but also for broader society (UNDP 2016:3). It increases economic growth and productivity, as well as efficiency; moreover, it reduces household poverty (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005; Golla et al. 2011; Grey 2005; Hanmer & Klugman 2016; Scanlam 2016).

Discrimination against women is, therefore, economically inefficient. A nation's economy is disadvantaged when half of the population is unable to compete equitably or maximize its full potential (Golla et al. 2011:3).

However, there is more to the disempowerment of women than just economic losses. Scanlam (2016) points out that "societies that discriminate against women are less likely to recognize their potential not only for contributions toward the achievement of sustainable societies but also toward [...] education and politics [...]" (:120). A society that educates and empowers its women during childhood and adolescence will translate into a society with higher literacy rates, later marriages, smaller families, safer motherhoods, improved child-care and survival, and a decline in gender discrimination (Anand & Yadav 2006:117).

And yet, for most women around the world, equality is not more than a theoretical construct and empowerment remains low. Women are, on average, twice as disempowered as men (Hanmer & Klugman 2016:243). All over the globe, women lack self-determination regarding their sexual rights and reproductive health as well as their freedom of movement (:249). According to the WHO (2013:20), over 35% of women worldwide have become victims of physical or sexual violence. With regard to intimate partner violence (IPV), education can have protective effects, especially if secondary or higher levels of education are achieved (Hanmer & Klugman 2016:257). In the debate on gender equality and female empowerment, there is thus broad consensus about the importance of school education, especially for girls (i.a. Golla et al. 2011; Grey 2005; Hanmer & Klugmann 2016; Kishor & Subbaiya 2005; Sen 2000; UNDP 2016). To be more precise, not only is the completion of primary education of utmost importance but “completing secondary education and beyond has consistently large positive associations, underlining the importance of going beyond primary schooling” (Hanmer & Klugman 2016:237)¹. Aikman and Unterhalter (2005) are convinced that “gender equality in education cannot be separated as a goal from gender equality in society as a whole” (:4). Though empowerment is directly linked to education, many women still face external obstacles that diminish their level of empowerment, such as “limited access to property and financial services, lack of social protection and unpaid care burden” (UNDP 2016:42). Especially in a patriarchal country like India, women suffer from multiple discriminations at all levels of society, with Dalit women being by far the most oppressed and excluded (Grey 2005:128-131). Thus, the question to which extent education can offer ways to break down deeply embedded social and patriarchal constructs remains. Consequently, the following research question for the current study arises: what influence does public secondary school education have on the empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India?

1.3 Research objectives

This study seeks to explore the lasting influence of public secondary education on the lives and empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India and attempts to better comprehend the effects of their educational experiences from their own perspective.

¹ Ahmed (2017) as well as Jain & Prasad (2017) equally stress the importance of secondary school education, especially for developing countries. For a detailed overview, see chapter 2.6.

To achieve the primary objective of this study, the following secondary research objectives have been set:

- (1) Discussion of the socio-economic conditions in India and their impact on the situation of Dalit women
- (2) Analysis of the perception of public secondary school education as a critical factor on the empowerment of Dalit women, their status and livelihood
- (3) Identification of further factors that impact the empowerment of Dalit women

1.4 Scope of the study

The focus of this paper will be upon Dalit women, since they face the highest degree of social exclusion and oppression in India. Twelve Dalit women were interviewed, thereby inquiring about their schooling experiences as well as the effects those experiences had on their lives so far. Half of the women underwent zero to five years of schooling, the other part successfully completed 12th grade. Interviews were conducted in only one state (Andhra Pradesh, South India) to deliberately minimize the number of variables influencing the interviews (e.g. differing educational systems as well as different value systems).

1.5 Limitations of the study

There are a few limitations to this research paper. First of all, the women interviewed represent a very small population within the Indian subcontinent and generalizations about the analysed data can only be made to a limited degree. The findings are not representative but constitute indications for further research. Secondly, the primary researcher is a Western woman who has had limited interaction with the Dalit population, despite having lived in India for 1 ½ years. The interpretation of the findings might therefore be culturally biased and limited. Third, all data gathered is based on perceptions, situations and personal experiences. It therefore reflects the women's individual opinions and cannot be generalized.

Lastly, the language barrier is a restraint to the study. The primary researcher does not speak Telugu and Tamil, the languages spoken in the area where the interviews were conducted. A translator was therefore necessary to conduct and then translate the

recorded interviews from Telegu and Tamil into English. Although parts of the interviews were translated by a second translator and the translations were almost identical with the first translation, information may still have gone lost or may have been wrongly interpreted.

1.6 Justification and importance of the study

In recent years, literature and research related to women's rights, gender and the feminist discourse in India have not only contributed to more insights concerning this complex topic, but have also influenced government policy regarding economic and educational empowerment as well as women's representation in local governance (Sabharwal & Sonalkur 2015:44). However, the interrelation of caste, class and gender with education has not received enough attention in current research (Paik 2009:176). Especially the influence of education on the social status of Dalit girls and women remains a neglected topic. It is well researched that Dalit women have benefited less from development than women from upper-castes, that they face (gender based) violence on a regular basis and have a high school drop-out rate (Grey 2005:130-131; Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015). However, to what extent education can help foster empowerment and may even lead to cracking the patriarchal social order remains unclear. There are studies supporting this view (e.g. Grey 2005; Moghadam 2007) as well as studies being very critical about it (Jeffrey et al. 2008; Haseena 2015; Sutradhar 2015).

Moghadam (2007) points out that access to higher education in combination with technical and professional competencies leads to a higher social status and thus empowerment of women (:155). According to him, education can change the lives of women at a personal level "by altering the pressure of dependence, hierarchy, and domination through economic autonomy but at the social level also has the effect of cracking the patriarchal social order" (:155). In contrast to this, Jeffrey et al. (2008) argue that education raises the social status and economic position of disadvantaged groups like Dalits only partly. In highly unequal societies like India, "the schooling strategies of oppressed people may not follow a simple upward trajectory towards growing participation in formal education" (:964). Sutradhar (2015) draws similar conclusions and states that education, though empowering, has only little effect on the

social mobility of Dalit women (:2), and Chin (2016) as well as Pappu (2015) argue that better employment opportunities often result in a higher risk of spousal violence for women.

In light of these rather inexplicit findings, this study seeks to gain more insights into possible interrelations between higher education and empowerment. At the same time, the study also pursues to understand the limits of education, especially in a deeply patriarchal society like India. How much impact does public school education really have on the empowerment of Dalit women? What else needs to be done to change the lives of Dalit women for the better? How can they be strengthened in their self-worth and self-confidence? How might the social order be broken down at least partly to empower female Dalits in a patriarchal society? And how can social upward-mobility be fostered?

1.7 Definition of key concepts

This section intends to clarify some of the key terms of this study to enable a better understanding of the research topic.

Gender

Gender is a widely used and often misunderstood term that does not refer only to the differences between men and women and should not be conflated with sex. Instead, it describes “the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity by which women and men are identified” (Momsen 2010:2).

Gender equality

Gender equality is about equal opportunities for both women and men. It describes a society in which women are as able as men to lead equally fulfilling lives. At the same time, “gender equality recognizes that men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints and have different aspirations” (Momsen 2010:8).

Empowerment

Empowerment is the enhancement of “an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choice and transform that choice into desired outcomes” (Alsop 2007:120). It is usually experienced in different areas (the state, the market, society) and at different levels (macro, intermediary and local) and thus needs to be understood as an integral and holistic framework (:127). Empowerment is about growing intrinsic capabilities and an inner transformation of one’s consciousness. At the same time, it also includes economic and political processes, the constitutional and legal framework of a country, social and cultural dynamics, education, human rights, the role of the central and state governments as well as voluntary agencies. Consequently, a person’s level of empowerment depends not only on his or her own capacities, but is constrained by the political, economic and social opportunities that are available to him or her.

The caste system

The caste system delineates an all pervasive and omnipresent system that rigidly stratifies the Indian society into hereditary, endogamous social groups - each with a definite, unalterable status (Pruthi 2004:5). Cultural, civil and economic rights are determined by birth and there are various regulatory mechanisms (like social ostracism, caste-related violence or restrictions on physical mobility) to uphold and enforce this unequal and hierarchical assignment of rights and social status (Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:45).

Dalits

Dalit is a self-ascribed term that literally translated means ‘downtrodden’, ‘crushed’ and ‘oppressed’ (Paik 2009:176). Dalits constitute the most disadvantaged group among the various socio-cultural subsets in India. They are not only discriminated against (e.g. when accessing services) but they also suffer from oppressive living

conditions, receive lower pay and are physically as well as socially segregated from the rest of Hindu society. Most of them live below the poverty line (Anand & Yadav 2006:116; Sabharwal 2011:154).

Capability Approach

The Capability Approach is a theoretical multipurpose framework developed by Amartya Sen that has been influential for evaluating human development and well-being, replacing narrower economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita (Wells 2011:para.2). Sen's framework is normative, rather than explanatory, giving no explanations for inequality, poverty, or well-being. Instead, it conceptualizes these notions and makes it possible to identify a space in which cross-cultural judgments on the quality of life can be made.

1.8 Chapter layout

This study contains six chapters.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the problem statement, the research objectives, and the scope, limitations and importance of the study. It also includes some short definitions of its key concepts.

The second chapter gives an overview of the theoretical framework, that is human development, gender equality, Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, empowerment, as well as school education and human development.

The third chapter outlines the context of the research problem, giving a brief description on India and Andhra Pradesh, on Hinduism, the caste system, the situation of women in India with specific focus on the situation of Dalit women, and closes with an overview of the Indian educational system.

Chapter four describes the research design and methodology, including the sample frame, sampling techniques and data gathering instruments. It also covers relevant ethical considerations.

Chapter five presents the findings of the data analysis.

The discussion of results, concluding remarks as well as recommendations for further research are presented in chapter six.

1.9 Conclusion

Given the rather ambiguous findings of recent literature concerning the empowerment of female Dalits through school education, this study seeks to shed more light on this topic. An overview of the background of the research problem, an extensive literature review as well as an introduction to the research design and methodology will be given before the findings will be discussed and conclusions and recommendations outlined.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The following chapters will locate the research topic at hand within the already existing body of research and give the reader an outline about the general background, that is human development, gender equality, Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, empowerment, and the role of school education and human development.

2.2 Human Development

Human development is a much debated and quite controversial concept in the development discourse and is by no means easy to define. Critics remark that the word development in itself "occupies the centre of an incredibly powerful semantic constellation" and that "there is nothing in modern mentality comparable to it as a force guiding thought and behaviour. At the same time, very few words are as feeble, as fragile and as incapable of giving substance and meaning to thought and behaviour as this one" (Esteva 2010:3). The concept of development has been coined and shaped by its history² and can therefore not be detached from the words which formed it: growth, maturation and evolution (:6). Most definitions of development, no matter the context, are forged by these concepts and usually carry predominantly positive connotations of change, describing it as a progression from the inferior to the superior, from the simple to the complex, from worse to better (:6). It is a word that indicates "that one is doing well because one is advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and towards a desirable goal" (:6). The problem with such a view is that

for two-thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word 'development' - profoundly rooted after two centuries of its social construction - is a reminder of what they are not. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved to others' experiences and dreams (:6).

This critique points to a second defect most definitions inherently comprise: their subjectivity. Anyone (be it a person or a set of persons) trying to define development inevitably encloses ideas of what well-being and the "ideal conditions of social

² For a detailed disquisition on the history of development see "The History of Development" (Rist 2010), the "Development Dictionary" (Sachs 2010) as well as "Introduction to Development Studies" (De Beer & Swanepool 2009).

existence” should look like in their opinion (Rist 2010:10). In this line of thought, humans are no longer defined by what they are, what they face and what they can take, but by measuring what they lack and, therefore, what they need (Illich 2010:107). The problem with such a measure is that it proposes solutions that are more focused on providing professionally defined supplies for survival than with fostering autonomous coping strategies (such as personal claims to freedom) (:108).

Being aware of these critical observations, the concept of human development will nevertheless be defined to avoid misconceptions in the ensuing study. Human development, according to the United Nations Development Programme, is

all about people — expanding their freedoms, enlarging their choices, enhancing their capabilities and improving their opportunities. It is a process as well as an outcome. Economic growth and income are means to human development but not ends in themselves — because it is the richness of people’s lives, not the richness of economies, that ultimately is valuable to people (UNDP 2016:25).

Human development is thus about the development of people. It ideally results in people influencing and actively shaping the processes that effect their lives (:2). Ultimately, human development is about the enlargement of freedoms: no one should be denied to pursue the choices they value (:1).

The gap between desired outcomes and reality is of course undisputable. Still today, human development is not only unequally distributed, but has also not reached every life, especially the lives of girls and women (:iii). How and why human development affects women and men differently, will be discussed in the following section.

2.3 Gender, gender equality and development

The predominance of ‘gender’ in the development discourse is undeniable. Gender talk and discussions on gender equality can be found in countless publications, turning gender into a mainstream topic in development policy and practice (Pearson 2016:157). Despite its success, the term is nonetheless misunderstood frequently. Gender does not refer solely to the differences between men and women and should not be conflated with sex. Instead, it describes “the socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity by which women and men are identified” (Momsen 2010:2). It is a socially constructed notion and its meanings vary not only from society to society but change

over time (:16). Gender roles are not static or universally consistent but always interrelated with class, ethnicity, age and religion (:2).

Interestingly though, “for all societies the common denominator of gender is female subordination, although relations of power between men and women may be experienced and expressed in quite different ways in different places and at different times” (:16). According to the 2016 Human Development Report of the UNDP, there is no country in the world that treats its women as well as its men. Although the subject of gender equality has found its way into almost every development agenda³, gender equality is far from being realised anywhere in the world. Though the positive achievements associated with modernization and globalization⁴ cannot be denied, its benefits are often not equally available or, what is worse, have not reached every life (UNDP 2016:iii). Reasons for this failure are manifold and complex. Consequently, a well differentiated understanding of what gender equality actually means is crucial. The International Labour Office (2007) describes it as:

the enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and treatment by men and women and by boys and girls in all spheres of life. It asserts that people’s rights, responsibilities, social status and access to resources do not depend on whether they are born male or female. It does not mean, however, that men and women are the same or must become the same, or that all labour market measures must arrive at the same results. Gender equality implies that all men and women are free to develop their personal abilities and make life choices without the limitations set by stereotypes or prejudices about gender roles or the characteristics of men and women (:91-92)

It is very well known that the lack of gender equality causes societies to lose human potential, which has costs not only for men and women but also for development (Momsen 201:08). For Drèze and Sen (2010), gender inequality is a social failure that contributes to other social failures, such as higher child mortality rates and related demographic attainments (:273). And yet, the extent of the inequalities between men

³ Amongst others, the *Treaty of Rome* (1957), the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* (1979), the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW)* (1993) the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA)* (1995), the *Treaty of Amsterdam* (1997), the *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights* (2000), the *Treaty of Lisbon* (2007/2009), the *Women’s Charter* (2010) as well as the *Paris Agreement* (under the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change) (2015).

⁴ Amongst others, “more than 1 billion people escaped extreme poverty, 2.1 billion gained access to improved sanitation and more than 2.6 billion gained access to an improved source of drinking water. The global under-five mortality rate was more than halved between 1990 and 2015 [...]. The incidence of HIV, malaria and tuberculosis declined between 2000 and 2015. The proportion of seats held by women in parliaments worldwide rose to 23 percent in 2016 [...]” (UNDP 2016:3).

and women remains alarming. Women are still actively disempowered and face discrimination in social, political and economic structures as well as in policies, institutions and strategies (UNDP 2016:3). This has a lot to do with the fact that the ongoing development process affects women and men differently. The aftermath of colonialism as well as the difficult position of poor countries of the South and those nations with economies in transition, exacerbate the effects of gender discrimination (Momsen 2010:1). Subsistence activities that were formerly undertaken by women are now resumed by the modern sector⁵ and better-paid jobs in new areas of technology usually go to men. Unfortunately, their earnings seldom reach their wives and children, since male income is less likely to be spent on the family (:1). The modernization of agriculture changed the division of labour between the sexes and increased not only women's subordination but also their workload (:1-2). Because of unequal property rights and continuous discrimination, women lose control over resources and productive assets frequently. The numbers are striking and speak for themselves: only 10–20 percent of the landholders in developing countries are women (UNDP 2016:3). Gender inequality is not only expressed in different property rights, however. There are many countries, where women and men are not even equals under the law, having different rights concerning contracts, their religious liberty as well as their mobility (:42; Nussbaum 2003:230). In some countries in the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America, women need their husband's or father's written permission if they want to do paid work or travel alone (Momsen 2010:1). But there is more: all over the world women have, on average, a lower Human Development Index (HDI)⁶ value than men, with the largest differences in South Asia where the female HDI value is 20 percent below the male one (UNDP 2016:3). Inequalities are greatest in education, leading to distinct long-lasting effects on opportunities and capabilities (:3).

Around the globe, the women are, on average, less literate than men are, less likely to receive preprofessional or technical education and faces greater obstacles when entering the world of both paid and unpaid work (Nussbaum 2000:229).

In the area of paid work, women not only work longer hours than men, but the jobs

⁵ For example, agriculture, fishing or work in the cottage industry (compare Hyder & Behrman 2014, Kaur 2007 and Novaczek et al. 2005)

⁶ The Human Development Index (HDI) indicates the wealth of a nation by measuring life expectancy, education, and income per capita. It was created “to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone” (UNDP 2016:5)

predominantly done by women also have the lowest status and are paid the least (Momsen 2010:3). Moreover, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, have to face sex discrimination in hiring and are more often the target of sexual harassment in the workplace (Nussbaum 2000:229; UNDP 2016:42).

In the realm of unpaid work, women are often left alone to support children and do the housework, since men are typically more reluctant to share in the domestic chores (:12; Momsen 2010:1). Hence, “women carry a double or even triple burden of work as they cope with housework, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment” (:1).

Furthermore, for most women around the world there is no equal participation in policy formulations that affect their lives. Consequently, their points of views are often not heard, underrepresented or sometimes even ignored (Moghadam 2007:139). What is worse: even if women are equal in theory, as is the case in a constitutional democracy like India, they are often treated as second-class citizens because of deeply rooted social and traditional beliefs, norms, attitudes and practices as well as cultural values (Anand & Yadav 2006:117; Nussbaum 2000:220). Simply because they are born as women, they are not treated as dignified counterparts who deserve respect, but “as mere instruments of the ends of others – reproducers, caregivers, sexual outlets, agents of a family's general prosperity” (:220). It is no wonder that in many nations women are less healthy and not as well-nourished as men, that women are more likely to be constrained by perceived and real insecurities, that they experience physical and psychological violence more often, are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and thus have fewer opportunities to live free from fear (:229). Interestingly, violence, including domestic violence, is not only limited to the poorer parts of a society, but “is evident in all societies, among all socioeconomic groups and at all levels of education” (UNDP 2015:69).

The interrelation of gender and development is striking. However, in the development discourse it was a neglected and overlooked topic for a long time. Up until 40 years ago, matters concerning gender and gender equality were mostly dismissed as a “feminist diversion from the real issues of poverty and modernization which preoccupied development thinking and planning” (Pearson 2016:157). With her ground-breaking volume on ‘Women’s role in development’ (1970), Ester Boserup was

among the first to place women in the centre of development. Her work led to the formation of the so called *WID* (Women in Development) framework that emphasized the significance of including women in development planning to enhance efficiency (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:17). The WID approach is both the framework with the longest history, as well as the most influential one, shaping policy thinking on gender, development and education especially in the 1990s (:18). Strong emphasis was placed on counting girls inside and outside schooling, highlighting the social benefits of their presence in school: reduced birth rates and infant mortality, increased GDP per capita, rising life expectancies and smaller as well as better educated families (:18). This analysis of linking school enrolment to efficiency and faster economic growth was expressed in key policy documents like UNESCO's *Delors Commission Report* (Delors 1996) and the World Bank's *Priorities and Strategies in Education* (World Bank 1995). Even more current papers display its influence in key passages, including the Department for International Development's *Girls' Education: Towards a Better Future for All* (DFID 2005).

While the WID approach believes that educating girls will also benefit themselves⁷, “the assumption is that these personal benefits are acceptable because they fit with accepted social benefits. Intrinsic benefits from education that might be more personal and private are not acknowledged” (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:18). Critics argue that the framework does not consider questions of subordination, exploitation and social division. The slogan ‘If you educate a man, you educate one person. If you educate a woman, you educate the nation’ illustrates the thinking of the WID approach very well: a woman’s education is for others, not for herself.

Equality in the WID framework is synonymous with equal numbers of resources, such as female and male teachers employed, boys and girls enrolled or numbers of pictures of men and women in textbooks (:19). What the approach does not consider are gendered processes of learning, the conditions in which female teachers have to work or questions concerning management practices in schools, as well as gendered structures of power in society (:19-20). And yet, regardless of its many shortcomings, it should be acknowledged that

⁷ The WID approach argues that education results in better protection from domestic violence and HIV, higher earning potential as well as greater political participation (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:18)

WID's simple messages about policy and practice, despite – or possibly because of – their lack of analytical complexity, have galvanised huge programmes by government and inter-government organisations, mobilised additional funding, and led to some important legal changes with regard to the provision of education (:20).

The WID approach was followed by the GAD (Gender and Development) framework that emerged in the late 1980s. It believed that women's gender position is relational (in comparison to men's) and stressed the significance of gendered power structures for inequality (Pearson 2016:158). According to the GAD, inequality should be tackled politically, since gender equality cannot simply be achieved through “a process of inclusion, by the provision of welfare support, or by a belief in the greater efficiency of projects or programmes that included women” (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:20).

In contrast to the WID approach, the GAD framework focused on the sex-based division of labour inside and outside the household, on changing gendered power structures and on political mobilisation (:21). The core of GAD analysis comprised two concerns: the first one addressed the distinction between practical gender needs (like food, water and shelter) and strategic gender interests (such as sexual violence in the family, discrimination in the workplace and the lack of political representation). Programmes were then supposed to be able to operate at both levels to redistribute power and increase gender equality (:21).

The second concern comprised the debate about empowerment⁸ and equality. While the WID approach understood equality in terms of equality of resources, the GAD framework linked equality to the removal of structural barriers to gender equality, such as unfair laws, discriminatory processes regarding the distribution of time, money, and schooling, labour-market practices and barriers to women's decision making in all settings (:22).

When compared to the WID, the achievement of GAD has been to point out how complex, yet important, institutional change is when it comes to redress gendered power in organisations as well as in schools, political decision making, the labour market and families (:26). Criticism arose nevertheless, being expressed by poststructuralism as well as related ideas that were loosely grouped together as ‘post-colonial theory’.

⁸ The term ‘empowerment’ will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.5

Their main critique was directed at various development practices and their attitude about the Third World, especially the generalization of notions such as ‘third-world woman’ and ‘development’ (:26). Further criticism entailed questions about identity, as well as debates on “how the meaning of gender entails fluid and shifting processes of identification in tension with the fixed structures noted by GAD analyst” (:27). Although poststructuralism did not influence government and NGO policies very much, its “analysis of the importance of identities has had resonance with political mobilisation to address subordinated identities, for example gay and lesbian identities in South Africa, or Dalit identities in India” (:27).

Despite their differences, the WID and GAD approach, as well as poststructuralism agree upon the importance of gender equality, human rights and education. However, none of the frameworks poses “questions in political philosophy regarding the nature of rights, needs, and capabilities and their implications for thinking about gender and education [...]” (:28). These issues have been addressed by Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach. The following section will therefore give a detailed overview on the Capability Approach and its relation to education and gender equality.

2.4 The Capability Approach

The following section gives an overview of the Capability Approach that was pioneered by the economist-philosopher Amartya Sen from 1979 onwards and was later supplemented by philosopher Martha Nussbaum. Within the broader development theories, Sen’s approach constitutes the theoretical foundation for the current research paper.

The Capability Approach has been influential for evaluating human development and well-being, replacing narrower economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita (Wells 2011:para.2). Sen’s concept makes it possible to identify a space in which cross-cultural judgments on the quality of life can be made, which is why the UNDP used it

as their theoretical basis for the Human Development Index as well as their Multidimensional Poverty Index (previously referred to as Human Poverty Index⁹).

The Capability Approach is a theoretical multipurpose framework that is normative, rather than explanatory; it does not give explanations for inequality, poverty, or well-being, but conceptualizes these notions and holds two normative assertions: first, that the freedom to achieve well-being is of central moral importance, and second, that having freedom to achieve well-being is strongly related to people's functionings, that is, the combination of things a person is able to do and be (Robeyns 2011:para.1).

Consequently, without denying the importance of economic growth, Sen does not measure well-being through income or GDP, but functionings and capabilities — the core concepts of his Capability Approach:

- *Functionings* are various states of human beings and doings; the set of things a person can do in life (Saito 2003:25). Functionings form a conceptual category and are in itself morally neutral (Robeyns 2011:para.10). A person can for example be educated or illiterate, adequately nourished, depressed or socially integrated (their 'beings'); at the same time, a person can care for a child or an elderly person, vote in an election, travel, take drugs, live vegan or eat animals (their 'doings') (:para.9). Functionings form a person's being and evaluating the quality of life thus needs to assess these constituent elements (Sen 2008:276).
- *Capabilities*, on the other hand, are opportunities. They are the set of valuable functionings a person can achieve. Capabilities comprise everything a person is able to do and be, respectively the range of real options a person has regarding the kind of life they want to lead (Kleist 2010:para.8; Saito 2003:17). Moreover, capabilities are essentially related to freedom: the freedom to choose between different functionings and lifestyles (Sen 2008:273).

The Capability Approach evolved out of various concerns Sen had about contemporary approaches that addressed and analysed well-being hitherto (Wells:para.7-11):

⁹ The Human Poverty Index (HPI) was developed to indicate the standard of living in a country. It complemented the Human Development Index and was replaced by the Multidimensional Poverty Index in 2010. The MPI measures acute poverty beyond income-based lists (Alkire et al. 2011:2).

- (1) *Evaluations focusing solely on means without considering what people can actually do with them* (such as Rawls Resourcism¹⁰). Giving people the same command over resources does not necessarily translate into giving them equal chances (Saito 2003:20). Sen (1980) points out that “people seem to have very different needs varying with health, longevity, climatic conditions, location, work conditions, temperament, and even body size” (:215-216), which is why not everyone is equally able to convert the same resources into valuable functionings.
- (2) *Evaluations emphasizing only subjective indicators on well-being without considering whether those preferences might have been unconsciously altered by the options available for the people concerned* (such as Utilitarianism¹¹). Those ‘adaptive preferences’ describe a phenomenon that is inter alia exhibited by women: *the habituation*, internalization and even preference of objectively harsh circumstances as a response to the restricted options they live in. Many women around the world have adjusted to their second-class status and display preferences that have usually been shaped by unjust background conditions (Nussbaum 2003:34).
- (3) *Evaluations that are not sensitive to functionings (actual achievements) and capabilities (effective freedom)*. When looking at well-being, it is important to recognize the significance of having valuable options — irrespective of whether one makes use of these options or not. It should, for example, be taken into consideration that two people might have the same low nutritional state and yet one starves because of external circumstances and the other fasts because he or she chooses to do so (e.g. out of religious convictions).
- (4) *Evaluations that are not open to the complexity of life*. In Sen’s eyes, one-sided approaches (such as Resourcism and Utilitarianism) that take short-cuts by excluding important and valuable information are insufficient for evaluating well-being.

¹⁰ Resourcism, or the *Rawlsian social primary goods metric* is defined “by its neutrality about what constitutes the good life” (Wells 2011:para.18). The approach, that was developed by John Rawls, “focuses on general purpose goods, such as income and wealth, opportunities and liberties, and the social basis of self-respect” (Robeyns 2011:para.66).

¹¹ Utilitarianism can be numbered to a set of “normative views that rely exclusively on mental states in their evaluative exercises” (Robeyns 2011:62).

For Sen, it is the capability set of a person that reveals the degree of freedom and well-being someone has, not mental attitudes (as is the case with Utilitarianism) or possessions (as in Resourcism). Wealth and property are an inappropriate way to measure the quality of life, since they give only very limited information on how well somebody is actually doing (Saito 2003:19). Consider this: owning, for example, a bike does not consequently mean that every person can make equal use of it. Whether it will provide its main characteristic, that is, transportation, depends on the one who uses it. If somebody is hemiplegic or has no legs, then this person does not thrive on owning a bike. Thus, having command over commodities is not necessarily synonymous with well-being, which is why Sen points out that “the usefulness of wealth lies in the things that it allows us to do – the substantive freedoms it helps us to achieve” (Sen 2000:14). Nussbaum (2003) supports Sen’s point of view and adds that a woman may, for example, “be as well off as her husband in terms of income and wealth they have, and yet unable to function well in the workplace, because of burdens of caregiving at home” (:53). Well-being is thus not really a matter of how rich someone is. Instead, a person’s well-being must be evaluated in the light of their freedoms. For Sen (2000) there is an intrinsic importance to freedom: not only does it equalize with well-being but it is also a key determinant for individual initiative and social effectiveness (:18). He points out, that “greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development” (:18). Removing substantial types of unfreedoms (like poverty, poor economic opportunities, systematic social deprivation, intolerance, neglect of public facilities, repressive states etc.) is thus indispensable for development and well-being (:3; 14).

Sen (1999:38-40) names five major types of freedoms, rights and opportunities that are necessary for advancing the general capability of a person:

- (1) political freedoms (e.g. uncensored speech and free elections)
- (2) economic facilities (opportunities for participation in trade and production)
- (3) social opportunities (every arrangement society makes for education, health care etc.)
- (4) transparency guarantees (freedoms that help to prevent corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings)

- (5) protective security (e.g. unemployment benefits and statutory income supplements, famine relief, emergency public employment etc.)

These freedoms should not be separated. Not only do they impact each other¹², but they are also influenced by the social safekeeping of tolerance and liberties, as well as the public support of all those facilities (such as basic health care, public education or the development of a free press). These factors help to generate human capabilities and, with that, expand individual freedoms (Sen 2000:42). A person's agency (or everything a person can positively achieve) is thus constrained by the political, economic and social opportunities that are available to him or her (:xi). This relation, however, is two-sided: individual freedom is not solely constrained by external factors, but "the institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of peoples' freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities" (:5; 31). If individual freedoms are exercised, the respective lives can consequently be improved and social arrangements be made more effective and appropriate (:31).

With his approach, Sen offers us a strategy that focuses on people and their ability to do and be what they have reason to value. It does not look at a person's possessions but instead

asks whether people are able to be healthy, and whether the means or resources necessary for this capability, such as clean water, adequate sanitation, access to doctors, protection from infections and diseases, and basic knowledge on health issues, are present. It asks whether people are well-nourished, and whether the means or conditions for the realization of this capability, such as having sufficient food supplies and food entitlements, are being met. It asks whether people have access to a high-quality education system, to real political participation, and to community activities that support them, that enable them to cope with struggles in daily life, and that foster caring and warm friendships (Robeyn 2011:para.17).

Sen's approach cherishes human freedoms and does not assess whether someone is enjoying an alternative, but whether that person has an alternative in the first place (Saito 2003:26). It furthermore views rights as ethical obligations we all owe to one another (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:29).

¹² „Political freedoms help to promote economic security. Social opportunities facilitate economic participation. Economic facilities can help to generate personal abundance as well as public resources for social facilities” (Sen 2000:11).

Relating to the research topic at hand, Amartya Sen's approach helps to develop a better and broader understanding about gender equality and the provision of basic education as means for capability enhancement and empowerment. The latter concept will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.5 Empowerment

In recent years, empowerment has become more and more important in the political discourse, being both a driver and goal of development (Alsop 2007:120; Malhotra & Schuler 2005:71). Looking at the respective literature, it becomes evident how multifaceted the concept of empowerment is. Meanings and terminologies vary, and a diverse set of definitions has emerged over the years. When speaking about women's empowerment, it is not even clear whether the concept can be equated with terms such as "female autonomy", "women's status" or "gender equality" (Shamshad 2007:140). The following section therefore attempts to clarify the concepts and definitions associated with empowerment.

According to the World Bank, empowerment is the "expansion of freedom of choice and action" (Narayan 2002:xviii). Alsop (2007) understands empowerment as the enhancement of "an individual's or group's capacity to make purposive choice and transform that choice into desired outcomes" (:120). It is a capacity that is influenced by two main factors: agency and opportunity structure. Agency is an actor's ability to visualize options and to choose them purposefully. With reference to Amartya Sen, Hanmer & Kluge (2016) further define agency as:

what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important. Agency invokes an ability to overcome barriers, to question or confront situations of oppression and deprivation, and, as individuals or together with others, to have influence and be heard in society. Agency has intrinsic value; it is important in its own right regardless of whether its exercise leads to increased well-being (:237).

There are limitations to the aspect of choice though. Options that are open to people are always shaped by context-specific dimension and constraints, including poverty and access to services. Also, what a person conceives as desirable in his or her life is influenced strongly by an individual's position in society, by cultural norms and rules, as well as by practices that are associated with family and kinship (:241). These factors

are what Alsop (2007) defines as opportunity structures. They are interrelated with agency and describe “those institutional aspects of the context that determine [an actor’s] ability to transform agency into effective action” (:121). Collaborating, agency and opportunity structure do not only empower to different degrees but empowerment is usually experienced in different areas (the state, the market, society) and at different levels (macro, intermediary and local) (:127).

A woman, for example, can exercise agency as a single person or collectively, within the family or through participating in politics as well as in formal and informal institutions (Hanmer & Kluge 2016:238). Being able to exercise agency in one area though, does not necessarily mean that the ability spills over into other areas (:239). The concept of agency is therefore absolute as well as relative. Two examples shall illustrate this further:

- (1) A woman working outside her home is an absolute concept of agency, but it is relative when compared to men.
- (2) A woman’s sense of agency can increase through education and the gaining of more knowledge – an absolute increase. This increase may remain relative though when looking at her influence within the family.

This phenomenon makes agency, and with that empowerment, “inherently difficult to measure” (:238). Empowerment is not only about growing intrinsic capabilities and an inner transformation of one’s consciousness, but it includes economic and political processes, the constitutional and legal framework of a country, social and cultural dynamics, education, human rights, the role of the central and state governments as well as voluntary agencies. Accordingly, a person’s level of empowerment depends not only on his or her own capacities, but is constrained by the political, economic and social opportunities that are available to him or her. What is more, empowerment is a process, which means that it cannot simply be given to people and that it can never be achieved in an absolute sense (Shamshad 2007:140). The process of empowerment aims at qualitative and sustained improvement and thus focuses on change – change towards more equity as well as towards greater freedom of choice and action (Malhotra & Schuler 2005:72). To achieve this, empowerment needs to tackle the differences in capabilities that deny actors the ability to make those transforming choices (Alsop 2007:121).

With a focus on female Dalits, this study particularly stresses the empowerment of Indian women. As already expounded, 'women' are not a homogeneous category, but one that is marked with differences in health status, educational attainments and economic performance. Empowering Indian women, respectively female Dalits, is therefore a task that encompasses some unique additional elements. First, women are not just another group among various disadvantaged subsets of society, but they overlap with most of them (Malhotra & Schuler 2005:5). Second, for women disempowerment is primarily located in household and family relations, which is not necessarily the case for other disadvantaged groups. Lastly, it needs to be pointed out that while regular empowerment (as for instance defined by Hanmer & Kluge 2016) requires institutional transformation, women's empowerment requires systemic transformation, especially of institutions supporting patriarchal structures. Thus, the empowerment of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society and does not only require a set of assets at the individual level (like education, employment and health) but also at the collective level. Women's empowerment therefore needs to challenge traditional power relations and equations, not only in the mind-sets of women, but, more importantly, in those of men.

Indicators of women's empowerment

Over the years, a broad body of literature concerning the conceptualization and empirical measurement of changes in the levels of women's empowerment has emerged, but concepts vary and are not well established.

Alsop (2007) suggests measuring the degree of experienced empowerment with the existence of choice, the use of it, as well as the effectiveness of that choice (:135). Other authors stress education as one of the main factors toward greater empowerment (Biswas 2016:210; GPE 2016:para.2; Gupta & Yesudian 2006:365; Hanmer & Kluge 2016:237; Moghadam 2007:155; Pappu 2015:308). Hanmer and Kluge (2016) found out that "completing secondary education and beyond has consistently large positive associations, underlining the importance of going beyond primary schooling" (:237). But not only women's education leads to more empowerment. The husband's or partner's educational level often plays an equally important role (:258).

There has also been wide acknowledgement of employment as a driving factor for greater economic empowerment (e.g. Golla et al. 2011). Various recent studies suggest

something else though. Both Chin (2016) and Pappu (2015) point out that pursuing gender equality and female empowerment in a country like India often leads to unintended consequences when it clashes with deeply-rooted patriarchal and social norms. Empowering women through more and better employment opportunities often results in a higher risk of spousal violence and does not necessarily lead to higher bargaining power (Chin 2016:773). Additionally, without the support of social institutions that “loosen women’s bonds to care and domestic responsibilities, their entry to paid employment exacts a heavy price through the double burden of work inside and outside the home” (Pappu 2015:314). In patriarchal cultures women are rarely allowed to shift their domestic duties to others and therefore have to bear the already mentioned double workload (Chin 2016:779).

Another debatable indicator is women’s participation in household decision-making. Kishor and Subbaiya (2005) found out that in developing countries joint decision-making, irrespective of the type of decision, may not be empowering for women. They do mention another indicator though. In their study, they argue that the use of modern contraceptives indicates a higher level of empowerment, since the women using modern contraceptives are in a position to decide about the number of children they would like to have and therefore are, at least partly, in control over their lives.

Empowerment thus is not a one-sided but a highly complex concept. When trying to measure it, its complexity needs to be mirrored not only in the choice of the research methodology but also in the selection and evaluation of indicators.

For the present study, the following indicators to measure women’s empowerment as individuals, in relation to their families and to their community, have been chosen (in no particular order):

- Choice surrounding sexuality, marriage, childbearing, and the exercise of reproductive rights (e.g. their use of contraceptives)
- Decision making in the family (including economic agency, such as spending decisions and bargaining power)
- Social and physical mobility (e.g. being able to leave the home)
- Participation in labour, land, and financial markets (including the women’s attitudes towards their work)

- Attitudes about son preference
- Experiences with (domestic/spousal) violence
- Engagement with collective action and politics (like voting)
- Self-reported attitude changes, including cognitive changes, such as increased confidence, greater autonomy and feeling more valued and respected
- Motivation to question regressive norms and institutions that perpetuate the subordination of women

2.6 School education and Human Development

The reciprocal relationship between education and human development has been a much-discussed topic in recent years. There are critical voices doubting a linear connection between education and empowerment (e.g. Haseena 2015; Pappu 2015 and Subramanian 2016). Yet, most of the research done on the topic of education and its relation to empowerment agrees that the provision of basic school education is associated with a multitude of positive outcomes. These include poverty reduction, economic growth, a significant decrease in fertility as well as (child) mortality rates, a growing sense of individual confidence and dignity, the enhancement of agency and autonomy, the expansion of one's capability set, the accumulation of human capital, a changing attitude towards gender roles, growing political awareness as well as increased participation in collective action (Ahmed 2017:ix; Hanmer & Klugman 2016:237,258; Jain & Prasad 2017:; Jeffrey et al. 2008:968; Kishor & Subbaiya 2005:4; Sen 2000:40,197; Sutradhar 2015:para.13).

Girls benefit from basic school education in particular. There is compelling evidence that even completing primary education has positive outcomes, though the completion of secondary education has the largest positive associations, such as a decline in IPV, greater influence over reproductive choices (especially regarding the use of contraceptives), higher educational attainments of the following generation and increased economic independence, which may “alter the pressure of dependence, hierarchy, and domination through economic autonomy” (Moghadam 2007:155; Pappu 2015:304). But there is more. Jain & Prasad (2017) point out that secondary school

education not only provides the link between primary and higher education, which in turn prepares the human capital base for the country, but that “among all levels of education, secondary education has the strongest impact on reducing income inequality and improving health perspectives” (:3). More than that, Ahmed (2017) stresses the point that secondary education plays a crucial role in the formation of active citizens as well as “in addressing the emerging human development concerns in countries engaged in building knowledge societies for staying connected to the globalization process” (:ix).

Although these positive effects are very well known in the development discourse, the visionary goal of granting basic school education to girls and boys equally around the world has still not been reached. According to the United Nations (2015), the primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions increased from 83% in 2000 to 91% in 2015 (whereby 97% equals the threshold for the achievement of universal enrolment) (:4). Although there are more girls in school than 17 years ago, in most regions around the world female school enrolment rates are still much lower than those of boys (:5). There is a positive upward trend concerning school enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education across the world. However, what the data does not include is the quality of the school education received (:28). Quality education is crucial not only for fostering the acquisition of knowledge, skills and critical thinking but also for the achievement of gender equality (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:4).

Thus, quality education ideally turns education into a transformative process which “promotes social change and contributes to building a just and democratic society. A quality education rejects gender discrimination and social injustice. Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity” (:4).

2.7 Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, human development, gender equality, the Capability Approach, empowerment and school education are all intertwined and interfere with each other on different levels. Understanding their interconnection offers ways to gain insights into possible ways of addressing unjust power relations and fostering potent and sustainable empowerment of Dalit women in India.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH AREA

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter offers a review over the research problem. The first section will give the reader a short introduction about India and Andhra Pradesh, which is followed by an outline about Hinduism, the caste system and the present situation of female Dalits living in India. The chapter will close with an overview of the Indian educational system.

3.2 India

India is a country not only rich in culture and tradition but also in opposites and contradictions: 1.21 billion inhabitants (or about one-sixth of the total world population), thousands of gods, over a thousand different languages, vast geographical disparities (glaciers and deserts coexisting with jungles and highly smog polluted cities), droughts and green revolutions as well as extreme poverty and wealth (Eversmeyer 2009:1; Census of India 2011; USCIRF 2017:2). With its many contradictions, India is a country that is hard to grasp. It is often said that no other country incorporates tradition and progress, past and future as much as India. The subcontinent is not only a nation but a conglomerate of various communities, all of them with their very own cultural assets, historical coinages and traditions.

India consists of 29 states and seven Union Territories. Culture, dialect, religion and economic conditions vary decidedly in these states. Although India is considered to be the largest democracy in the world, its social structure is still characterized by undemocratic practices, such as the caste system¹³ and wide-ranging corruption. Poverty rates are high in India. Although the intenseness of many basic deprivations has been significantly reduced in the last decades, more than half of the Indian population (55.3%) still live in multidimensional poverty and an additional 18.2% live near multidimensional poverty (Drèze & Sen 2010:11; UNDP 2016:4). The majority of those who live in poverty reside in rural areas. 73% of Indians live in villages (Census

¹³ For a detailed overview of the caste system, please see section 3.5.

of India 2011). Out of this population, less than 10% have paid jobs, more than 95% do not earn enough to pay taxes and only around 2.5% own a car (Katyal 2015:para.2).

In contrast to many other developing countries, India still struggles with providing elementary education. 25.96% of the adult population are illiterate, with women being on average less literate than men (34.54% compared to 17.86%) (Census of India 2011). Life expectancy ranges around 68 years, with an infant mortality rate of 37.9 (per 1,000 live births) (UNDP 2016:4-6). Being a deeply patriarchal society, female infant mortality is much higher than that of male children (NIMS, ICMR & Unicef 2012:62). It does not stop here though. Sen and Drèze (2010) note that

the mortality rates of females tend to exceed those of males until the late twenties, and this—as we know from the experiences of other countries—is very much in contrast with what tends to happen when men and women receive similar nutritional and health care. One result is a remarkably low ratio of females to males in the Indian population compared with the corresponding ratio not only in Europe and North America, but also in sub-Saharan Africa. The problem is not, of course, unique to India, but it is particularly serious in this country, and certainly deserves public attention as a matter of major priority (:229).

India remains a country of contradictions. Rapid economic expansion in specific fields (such as computer software production and the use of information technology) are as real as India's slow progress in elementary education, land reform, health care and environmental protection (Drèze & Sen 2010:2)

The following section gives a short overview of Andhra Pradesh, the state where the interviews for this study were conducted.

3.3 Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is the eighth largest state of the Indian subcontinent and located at the southeastern coast of the country. It covers an area of 162,307 km² and has 49,386,799 inhabitants, the tenth largest population of Indian states (Census of India 2011:40). In June 2014, Andhra Pradesh was divided into two states, with Telangana forming a new state in the north-west. Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh's hitherto capital, was transferred to Telangana but will remain the capital for both states for a period of up to 10 years (India Code Legislative Department 2014:2).

With 34,776,389 people living in rural areas, Andhra Pradesh has a rather low urban population that makes up only 29.6% of the total population (Census of India 2011:40). 10.6% of the state's inhabitants are children, among which 2,686,453 are boys and 2,535,931 are girls (:40). Andhra Pradesh has a sex ratio of 996 females per 1000 males, making it higher than the national average of 926 per 1000 (:41). With 1007 females per 1000 males, the SC¹⁴ sex ratio lies far above the national average of 945 (:41). The literacy rate stands at 67.4% and is thus below the national average of 73.0%. With 64.5% the SC literacy is even lower, whereby more Dalit men (71.7%) are literate than Dalit women (57.4%) (:41). This is all the more striking as there are considerably more female than male Dalits in Andhra Pradesh.

The literacy rate in Chittoor district, where the interviews for this study were conducted, is with 71.5% higher than the state average (:42). With 997 females per 1000 males the sex ratio in Chittoor district is also slightly higher than the state average of 996 (:42). The female literacy rate lies at 63.3% (:44).

The population of Chittoor district consists of 18.8% Dalits and has, with 1017 females per 1000 males, one of the highest sex ratios in Andhra Pradesh (:45). With 66.3%, the Dalit literacy in Chittoor district is above state average. Again though, far more male Dalits (74.7%) than female Dalits (58.0%) are literate (:45).

Andhra Pradesh's official language is Telugu. However, since Chittoor borders Tamil Nadu, the Tamil speaking population is quite high as well.

According to the Census of India (2011), the majority of Andhra Pradesh's population is Hindu (90.87%), with Muslims constituting a sizeable minority of 7.32%. Christians make up 1.38% of the population, while Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains constitute the remaining part of the population.

3.4 Hinduism

India's religious diversity is striking. For centuries a vast number of different religious groups like Muslims and Christians, Sikhs, Jains, (Neo-) Buddhists, Parsis and Bahais have been coexisting with the by far largest group, the Hindus. According to the Census

¹⁴ SC stands for Scheduled Caste. For detailed information on this topic see chapter 3.5.

of India (2011) 79.79% of the Indian population belong to the world's third biggest religion that has impacted the country immensely in various forms, mostly through the main emergence it spawned: the caste system.

For a Westerner, Hinduism is hard to grasp. There is no generally accepted definition; in fact, many introductory books on Hinduism begin with reservations: like India, Hinduism is too complex to be fully understood; it is not a homogenous religion but rather a potpourri of religions, attitudes to life, doctrines, rites and cults, moral and social norms that have come together over the centuries (Michaels 2004:3). It has even been argued that Hinduism, as an intelligible religion, is a Western construct. Dumont (1980) for example states that "today, without wanting to admit it, we know that Hinduism is nothing but an orchid cultivated by European scholarship. It is much too beautiful to be torn out, but it is a greenhouse plant: It does not exist in nature" (:53-54).

It remains debatable whether Hinduism really is a Western construct or not. Noteworthy though is that the use of the word Hindu is a foreign appellation (Scholz 2008:158). Like the word 'India' it derives from the Sanskrit word *sindhu*, meaning river or sea (Michaels 2004:13). It was initially used by the Persians to label the people living at the Indus River (:13; Narayanan 2010:6). Later, with the invasion of the Muslims (711-712 A.D.), the word was used to describe the non-Muslim population. Considered in this light, the term Hindu also included Buddhists, Jainists, Sikhs as well as all other smaller religions (Knott 2009:162; Michaels 2004:13). The Europeans later adopted this labelling and the term slowly turned from the description of a population (all non-Muslims) into the description of a religion that the Indians themselves did not use until quite recently (:13).

Although Hinduism always has been rather intangible, it is not without form. It simply displays a kind of religion we are not used to in the west: there is no *one* founder, no *one* church, no *one* spiritual head, no *one* doctrine or symbol and no *one* spiritual centre (Knott 2009:160; Michaels 2004:3; Narayanan 2010:6; Vermeer & Neumann 2008:74). Some Hindus worship only one god, some many; some worship demons and spirits, some even stones. Hinduism is full of seemingly contradictions: the prohibition of hurting anything living (*ahimsā*) exists next to animal sacrifices, Yoga next to Tantrism. Most Indians have no problem following several paths at the same time, since the Indian

thinking is one of “as-well-as” categories, while most people in the West tend to think in categories of “either-or” (Rosenshon 2014:15). What is important to understand is that:

the individual cults, sects, philosophies, and theistic systems are not different religions [...] but rather cognitive systems or socioreligious institutions of a society that has reached an understanding in principle about the interchangeability and identity of the systems of belief (Michaels 2004:19).

Interestingly, it is out of this religion that the caste system has evolved: an all pervasive and omnipresent system that rigidly stratifies the Indian society into hereditary, endogamous social groups, each with a definite, unalterable status (Pruthi 2004:5).

The following section gives a short overview of the origin and nature of the caste system.

3.5 The caste system

The caste system is a Hindu institution so deeply embedded in the Indian society that even other religious groups are known to conform to it (Bidner & Eswaran 2014:34; Subramanian 2016:5). Caste is a phenomenon that is not only essential in forming one’s identity in India but “unlike other social categories such as gender and race, it operates, sometimes in very blatant forms and sometimes in extremely subtle ways, to order the social space, marginalising some sections of the population and privileging others” (:2). The word caste is a foreign appellation and derives from the Portuguese word *casto*, meaning pure, chaste (Meisig 2003:159; Subramanian 2016:3). The word depicts the attempt of the Portuguese to name a phenomenon unknown to them from their own culture: the discrimination and hierarchical classification of social groups, especially regarding marriages, food and occupation (Meisig 2003:157; Skoda 2014:para.4).

3.5.1 Structure of the caste system

On a large scale, the caste system consists of a fourfold division of socioeconomic categories called the *varnas*¹⁵. The four varnas are said to emanate from the cosmic

¹⁵ “The Sanskrit word *varna* has many connotations, including colour, description, selection, and classification” (Madan 2015:para.3).

man Purusha: the Brahmins (priests, teachers and preachers) derived from his head, the Kṣatriyas (warriors, soldiers, kings and governors) from his shoulder, the Vaiśas (merchants, cattle herders, agriculturists and artisans) from his torso and the Sūdras (labourers and service providers) from his feet (Skoda 2014:para.4; Subramanian 2016:3). Accordingly, the Brahmins form the head of the hierarchy while the Sūdras constitute the lowest category within the system.

Each of the four varnas can furthermore be subdivided into hundreds of jatis¹⁶, represented by local village societies with considerable regional variation. Birth alone decides about the varna and jati a person belongs to and social mobility remains low, since interaction with lower castes leads to status degradation (Meisig 2003:157). It is important to understand that Hinduism is not a religion you chose or that one can convert to, but a social system you are born into: a Hindu is born as a Hindu and dies as a Hindu. Cultural, civil and economic rights are determined by birth and the caste system provides various regulatory mechanisms (like social ostracism, caste-related violence or restrictions on physical mobility) to uphold and enforce this unequal and hierarchical assignment of rights and social status (Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:45).

According to the French sociologist Célestin Bouglé (1971), the caste system rests upon three pillars: (1) the separation of groups with particular regard to marriage and food, (2) a hereditary division of labour and (3) hierarchy (:20). Underlying these three principles are the notions of purity and impurity, which build the foundation of the caste hierarchy (:82). This separation into ritually pure and impure castes leads to marriage restrictions, as well as a differentiation between professions that are considered pure (priests) and impure (leather workers). Furthermore, even touching those who are labelled impure or ‘polluted’, is considered contaminating and requires more or less time-consuming purification rituals.

3.5.2 Origins of the caste system

The hierarchical division of people into different castes has shaped the social life in India over centuries and left deep marks in the social, political as well as economic spheres until today. How the caste system evolved remains unclear, though multiple

¹⁶ *Jati* derives from the word *jan* which means “form of existence fixed by birth” (Madan 2015:para.9) and describes “a subcaste or closed social group into which one is born and within which one must marry” (Ferry 2008:9).

theories emerged over the centuries. Until quite recently most scholars and historians believed that the caste system arose after the invasion of the Aryans from the north-west around 1500 BC with the conquerors imposing an oppressive system on those who were vanquished (Bidner & Eswaran 2014:6). However, this assertion has been largely rejected in recent literature. There is both archaeological and genetic evidence suggesting that the caste system of India was an entirely indigenous development and not one imposed by foreign invaders (:6). According to the archaeological findings, the Vedic culture, which most probably spawned the caste system around 3500 BC, originated through an earlier culture at Harappa¹⁷ (Shafer and Lichtenstein 2005). The genetic evidence strongly indicates that a large external infusion into the Indian gene pool since 3500 BC is very unlikely to have taken place (Sahoo et al. 2006:847).

In anthropology, the prevailing theory of caste is that of Louis Dumont (1980), who believed that the concepts of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ are key to understanding the origins of the caste system. Over 30 years later, however, Bidner and Eswaran (2014) argue that Dumont’s theory does not explain why these concepts were taken as given. Rather, they view the purity and pollution dichotomy as means to establish the caste system - and not as its cause (:7). The cause, they believe, is mainly of socioeconomic nature: the caste system came into existence to exploit the complementarities in family production (:26). In India, it was (and largely still is) of utmost importance for a man to choose a woman with similar occupational skills. If spousal complementarities in production are high, chances are good that their income will be at maximum level. If the spouses don’t match with regard to their occupation, income falls. Bidner and Eswaran (2014) further believe that it was the Brahmins who initiated the first separation into endogamous groups, since they wanted to ensure the intact oral transmission of Hindu Scriptures over generations. Looking at the enormity of the task (note that the Rig Veda, which is only the first among the four Vedas, has about 11000 verses), it was essential to keep the group size big enough (:30-31). This of course required women “with skills complementary to those of their husbands and with an upbringing conducive to the Brahmin’s way of life” (:31).

¹⁷ Harappa is an ancient city, which was excavated in the 1920s in present day Pakistan. Its inhabitants were part of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) that had its mature period around 2600–1900 BC. The people of the IVC were literate, but the Indu Script remains to date undeciphered (Narayanan 2010:12).

Following this line of thought, the caste system did not primarily arise out of secular notions of power but because of socioeconomic considerations. Notions of power, like impurity and pollution, were (and still are) used to uphold the caste system. It is a system of socialization, where all individuals are made to “acknowledge and support the social boundaries imposed on them, and this is effected primarily through social rituals” (Olivelle 1998:214). Exclusion is therefore internal to the system and thus necessarily an outcome of its underlying principles (Ingole 2012:74).

3.6 The situation of women in India

India is a country with a deeply patriarchal culture. The inferiority of women was institutionally inscribed in the code of Manu around 700 BC and vast inequalities remain to date (Grey 2005:142). Remarkably, “the persistence of sharp gender inequalities in many different forms is one of the most striking aspects of Indian society” (Drèze & Sen 2010:18). In India, it is the male child who is favoured. This so-called ‘son preference’ has deep roots in religious, social and economic norms that favor males and depreciate females. Sons, and not daughters, are expected

to provide financial and emotional care, especially in their old age; sons add to family wealth and property while daughters drain it through dowries¹⁸; sons continue the family lineage while daughters are married away to another household; sons perform important religious roles; and sons defend or exercise the family’s power while daughters have to be defended and protected, creating a perceived burden on the household (Pande & Malhotra 2006:2).

The Indian saying “Bringing up a daughter is like watering a neighbor’s plant” very well illustrates the mindset many Indians have: girls are largely regarded as temporary members of their families, a drain on its wealth and thus an economic liability, whereas boys are looked upon as investments (Anand & Yadav 2006:117; Anjanamma & Nagaraja 2015:475). But there is more: bearing a son gives women a standing in the household as well as in the community (Das Gupta et al 2003:174). A woman without a son has limited bargaining power as compared to her mother-in-law and her other relatives; she will therefore be more vulnerable in old age, having no son to protect her

¹⁸ “Dowry is a form of marriage payment in Indian society in which a bride brings property or money to her husband and his family at the time of marriage” (Sabri et al. 2015:852).

(:174). Also, she carries a certain risk that her husband will leave her to take a second wife and her position in the family will shift to domestic help (:175).

In most of India girls are, consequently, considered less desirable; sex selective abortion, as well as the homicide of female babies right after their birth are widespread (Pande & Astone 2006:2). This systematic devaluation of women does not come without consequences: for more than 100 years the Indian census has reported highly distorted sex ratios in India (:2). Even if a girl is not aborted or killed right after birth, she is more likely to die during her early childhood than any boy is (:2). This excess female mortality is mirrored in a vast number of ‘missing women’¹⁹ whose absence can be ascribed to disparities in care, including medical attention (Drèze & Sen 2010:18). In India, girls are much more likely to suffer from health and nutritional discrimination than boys: of all five-year-olds, 13% more girls are, in comparison to boys, not vaccinated and six percent more girls than boys are severely malnourished (Pande & Malhotra 2006:4). Interestingly, not all girls are equally affected by these discriminations. How distinct and strong son preference is, depends on the desired family size and the number of already existing sons (:4). Pande and Malhotra (2006) found out that parents’ discrimination against a daughter depends on the sex of her older siblings: if parents already have a daughter, they are more likely to neglect a second (:4). In the same way, a daughter is more desired if parents already have sons. This suggests that “at least some daughters are desired even in a culture where many are not” (:4).

Still, men are usually placed in a more favourable and superior position than women, who are taught to prioritize the needs of the male members in the family (Nussbaum 2000:220; Roy & Niranjana 2004:23-24). Although the equal status of man and woman - irrespective of caste, social position and religion – was signed into law in 1949, a promising constitution does not seem to suffice (Scholz 2008:183). From birth onwards, Indian girls are discriminated against, often abused and usually not as much invested in as boys are, especially when it comes to fostering education (Nussbaum 2000:220). India has the largest number of illiterate women in the world, which becomes most apparent when looking at its rural parts: out of every one hundred girls

¹⁹ The term ‘missing women’ describes “a way to assess the cumulative impact of gender bias in mortality by estimating the additional number of females of all ages who would be alive if there had been equal treatment of the sexes among the cohorts that are alive today” (Klasen & Wink 2003:264).

who enrol in Class I, only one enters Class XII (Moghadam 2007:156). Causes for this phenomenon are complex and seem to be rooted in a

combination of parental apathy, sociocultural norms, direct and indirect costs, market failure to capture the true costs and benefits of girl's education, lack of enforcement of the law, inadequate and inappropriate educational infrastructure, as well as low participation of women in the system that has made female education trail behind the education of men (:156).

Promoting a girl's education is usually seen as an investment that will benefit someone else, since most daughters leave their parents' home when they get married (Anjanamma & Nagarajy 2015:657). Especially for parents from low-income groups, enormous "opportunity costs are involved when they decide to educate their girls. The expectation of future employment is an important factor in their decision to opt for education in spite of the odds being stacked against them" (Pappu 2015:302). India, therefore, does not only struggle with low female literacy levels but the country also has one of the lowest proportions of women in the labour force (Momsen 2010:17; UNDP 2016:216). Being a patriarchal society, women's involvement in economic activities often clashes with traditional mindsets and is thus not welcome (Chin 2010:778). Even when women manage to engage in work outside the home, they are usually not allowed to shift their domestic tasks to others and are thus burdened with double workloads (Chin 2016:779). What is more, working women in India suffer from a higher risk of physical spousal violence, regardless of their employment and income status (:715).

A study of Smith and Kethini (2006) illustrates the correlation of female employment and the higher risk of domestic violence (DV) very well: male prison inmates who were serving life sentences for DV homicides regarded their victims, who sought work outside the home in the face of immense poverty, as challenging their male authority.

DV homicides and suicides cause a substantial number of deaths among women in India (Sabri et al. 2015:851). In the Indian context, DV has been defined as "any form of coercion, power and control — physical, sexual, verbal, mental or economic — perpetuated on a woman by her spouse, ex-spouse or extended kin, arising from the social relations that are created within the context of marriage" (Abraham 2000:221). There is another major cause for DV-related crimes India: the dowry death. A dowry death is the death of a married women in her in-laws' home, "caused primarily by the

harassment and torture for alleged inadequacy or delayed payment of dowry or fresh demands for dowry” (Vindhya 2000:1106). In 2014, a total of 8,455 cases of dowry deaths were registered in India (The Indian Express 2015:para.2). Although this figure is alarmingly high, it is probably still an underestimate of the actual number since many homicides of women are falsely labelled as suicides or accidents (Sabri et al. 2015:853). Also, “a large number of DV-related cases (for example, fatal burns, poisonings, suicides) are under-reported due to stigma and sociocultural factors or are misclassified in police records” (:853). In India, most DV homicides are committed by husbands. There is evidence, however, suggesting that “mothers-in-law are complicit in murders of their daughters-in-law and are often co-offenders with their sons and other members of the family” (:854).

As illustrated in this section, an Indian woman faces violence and discrimination from birth until death: female feticide, domestic violence and homicides as well as sexual harassment are realities for most girls and women (Rai 2015:60). All of these injustices are even more prevalent to Dalit women, who face the triple burden of enduring discrimination not only through gender but also through caste and class (Grey 2005:129; Paik 2009:176; Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:46; Rao 2015:411). Their low position in the Indian society will be described more detailed in the following section.

3.7 The situation of Dalit women in India today

Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SC)²⁰ do not form the bottom of the caste system but stand outside it. Those who belong to the group of Dalits are physically as well as socially segregated from the rest of the Hindu society and deprived of almost all rights (Anand & Yadav 2006:116; Sabharwal 2011:154). Dalit is a self-ascribed term that literally translated means ‘downtrodden’, ‘crushed’ and ‘oppressed’ (Paik 2009:176). It describes very well what remains a sad truth even today: Dalits still constitute the most disadvantaged group among the various socio-cultural subsets in India, although the caste system was officially abolished in 1955 (»Untouchability Offences Act«).

²⁰ *Scheduled Castes* is the official term used by the Indian government when referring to Dalits. It should not be equated with the term *Scheduled Tribes*, since they represent different social categories. In contrast to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes “do not strictly fall within the caste hierarchy, and have distinct (often considered non-Hindu) cultural and social mores. Also, they do not face ritual exclusion, say in the form of untouchability, as do the Scheduled Castes or ‘Dalits’” (Das & Mehta 2011:1).

Dalits make up 16.6% of the Indian population, meaning that in total number there are more Dalits living in India than there are people in Argentina or Turkey (Census of India 2011). Disproportionately lower to their relative size among India's population is their access to basic education and gainful employment (Anand & Yadav 2006:116; Knott 2009:131; Moghadam 2007:141). Dalits suffer from oppressive living conditions; they receive lower pay and most of them live below the poverty line (Anand & Yadav 2006:116). To survive, they are forced to take up menial jobs as cleaner of drains and toilets, tanners²¹, scavengers, sweepers and cobblers. Dalits are generally considered to be impure and unclean, a notion called "ritual pollution", which is practiced in the form of untouchability. It is a phenomenon that restricts them not only in their physical and social mobility, but also in their access to all larger activities and spheres of society (socio-political, economic and cultural).

Dalit women suffer similar exclusion, discrimination, untouchability and poverty as Dalit men do. However, being a patriarchal society, it is the women and girls who bear the brunt of this oppression, exclusion and repression. Unlike male Dalits, female Dalits are afflicted with "subordination resulting from patriarchy within the family, at places of work, and in society and like their poor non-SC/ST sisters, they also suffer from lack of access to income earning assets, education and resultant high poverty" (Sabharwal 2011:157). And yet, Dalit women differ from the rest of the Indian women insofar as they face additional caste related discrimination. Grey (2005) therefore describes female Dalits as "the least among the Dalits", "the Dalits of the Dalits" or "Thrice Dalits", since they have to face the triple burden of enduring discrimination through caste, class and gender (:129; Paik 2009:176; Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:46; Rao 2015:411).

Female Dalits thus suffer the highest degree of social exclusion and oppression in India, which is clearly reflected in the differing achievements concerning the HDI: non-Dalit women comply with much more indicators of human development than Dalit women do (Sabharwal 2011:157).

The caste-related discrimination Dalit women face is also reflected in differing literacy rates. In 2011, 56.5% of SC women were literate as compared to 65.64% of non-SC women (Census of India 2011:104). Moreover, most Dalit women have limited access

²¹ A tanner is someone whose occupation is to make leather from animal skins.

to income earning assets and are dependent on wage labour (Sabharwal 2011:157). This combination of low literacy rates and high incidences of wage labour and unemployment result in high degrees of poverty and deprivation among Dalit Women (:157). According to the 2015-16 National Family and Health Survey, 54.2% of SC women suffered from anaemia compared to 50.8% of non-SC women and 26.7% of Dalit women had a Body Mass Index (BMI) below normal ($BMI < 18.5\text{kg/m}^2$) as compared to 15.5% of non-SC women (:6). Malnutrition of mothers has far-ranging impacts on the health outcomes of their children. 39% of SC children under five years were underweight compared to 29% of other's children (:5). What is even more worrisome: almost half of the SC children under five years were stunted as compared to 31% of non-SC children (:5).

And yet, even despite constitutional changes, the situation of Dalit women in India remains mostly unaffected. Being both a woman and a Dalit “makes them a key target of violence and systematically denies them choices and freedoms in all spheres of life” (IDSN 2016:2). Due to a limited access to justice as well as the “widespread impunity in cases where the perpetrator is a member of the dominant caste, Dalit women are considered easy targets for sexual violence and other crimes,” since the offenders are likely to get away with it easily (:2). According to the 2015 Equity Watch report, rape cases registered against SC women have increased over 47% since the last decade (:32). In 2014 six Dalit women were raped per day, on average (:32).

A Dalit woman experiences these discriminations at every level of society: village, district, state and nationally; but more than that, also in her own home and most intimate relations (Grey 2005:131; Voykowitsch 2005:46). There is statistical evidence of patriarchy even within the Dalit community, indicating that “Dalit husbands retaliate against their own oppressed position by perpetrating violence against their wives” (Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:68). This violence can take on a variety of forms and usually causes psychological, physical or sexual damage to the victim (:68).

When trying to understand the situation of Dalits in general, it is necessary to recognise sexual exploitation as one of the key differences between Dalit women and men. Dalit women are not only confronted with caste-driven gender- and domestic violence, but

many of them become victims of the so-called “devadasi/jogini system”²² that sexually exploits them in the name of religion from a very young age onwards (Sabharwal 2011:157; Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:68).

All of these findings and numbers show that caste-based discrimination is still real and far from being history. It is a phenomenon which is not only deeply rooted in the Indian society, but also widespread. It stretches across sectors in health, equal access to goods and services (such as education) as well as housing (IDSN 2016:4).

To better understand the inequalities of Dalit women in India at least partly better, the following section shall give an overview of the educational system in India.

3.8 The educational system of India

India has always been a place of knowledge and learning. Having evolved around 1500 BC, the country’s educational system is one of the oldest in the world and has been shaped deeply by its diverse cultural, political, social, and spiritual history (Lang-Wojtasek 2013:216). Gupta (2007) notes, that there are few countries with “systems of education that have had such a long, continuous and relatively stable history as is the case in India” (:70). And yet, when looking at the situation today

India has been left way behind in the field of basic education even by countries which have not done better than India in many other developmental achievements, such as Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Even Bangladesh, which remains far behind India in many other respects (and has a much lower per-capita income), is rapidly catching up in terms of educational achievements in the younger age groups (Drèze & Sen 2010:12).

To understand why India lags behind in the field of basic education, it is important to look at its educational system which is rather complex and diverse. Its modern form was established by the British colonial power but has also been influenced by Christian missionaries and their establishment of the so-called Convent Schools (also referred to as Monastic Schools). Still today, different types of schools coexist (governmental, semi-governmental, private, formal and informal) that exhibit major disparities in their

22 In the devadasi system (temple prostitution) “Dalit girls are married to a village god by their parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by the upper-caste landlords and rich men of the village. This system of religious sexual exploitation is found in parts of India such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Orissa” (Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:68).

quality. Since 1986 there has been a nationwide, mandatory framework called the *Ten-Plus-Two-Structure*. The first ten years of schooling are divided into eight years of Elementary Education (five years Primary and three years Upper Primary or Middle School) and two years of Secondary Education. Depending on the states and districts, there are variable lengths in the Elementary Education (5+3 or 4+4 as well as 4+3 or 5+2), as well as in the secondary education (two and three years) (Gupta 2007:93; Lang-Wiojtasiak 2013:218). These ten years of schooling can then be complemented with the so called Higher Secondary Education (academic or vocational) which qualifies students for Tertiary Education that is offered at over 33000 colleges and 659 universities (Hillger 2014:para.1).

Even today, India continues to struggle not only with the quality of its education but also with accessibility. In article 45 of India's 1950 constitution, India set itself the visionary goal to develop an eight-year long elementary education for all children, ages six to 14 years, within the next ten years. This goal has still not been reached fully, but there have been other noteworthy improvements. In 2002, the Indian government launched a programme called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Hindi, meaning 'Education for All Movement') that aimed at the universalisation of elementary education. Since then, the wide differences in the literacy rates between urban and rural areas, as well as between men and women declined and school enrolment in primary school has reached almost 100% in all states both for boys and girls. However, numbers decline in secondary school considerably (Hillger 2014:para.11). Despite these positive achievements, two alarming trends can be observed: since the Right to Education (RTE) became operative in 2010, a measurable decline in the already low student performances, mostly in government schools, has been observed (:para.13). This trend did not remain without consequences. Due to the low educational standards in government schools, an increasing number of parents try to enrol their children in private schools. Between 2006 and 2014 numbers in private school enrolment rose from 18.7% to 30.8% (ASER 2016:17). Today, most children in government schools belong to the poorest of the poor families, especially in urban locations (Subramanian 2016:7). But school choice is not only related to the parent's financial situation. There are states in India, where 97% of the total percentage of children enrolled in the primary grades belong to SC, ST and OBC (Other Backward Castes) categories, making it evident that "school choice depends on the caste category to which a student belongs and that a

child from SC category is most likely in a government school in rural India” (Subramanian 2016:7). With the growing gap between learning successes in private and government schools, chances of climbing the educational ladder for children from poorer families, who cannot afford private school fees, are declining (Hillger:para.13). It is alarming that only 10% of the youth who are college-age actually access higher education and “among them, those who can get world-class education would be a tiny minority” (Subramanian 2016:6).

How low the educational achievements in government schools are, was dramatically shown in the 2009 PISA study (Hillger 2014:para.4). For the very first time, Indian students participated in the survey and the results were disillusioning. Although the students came from states representing the educational lead of India, only 11-15 percent reached the basic competences to successfully take part in economic and social life as defined by the OECD (OECD average: 81 percent). Since then, India has not participated in another PISA study and the only annual source of information regarding learning levels of children available in India today are the surveys conducted by the ASER centre. With the exception of 2015, the ASER survey²³ has been conducted every year since 2005 and provides estimates of children’s schooling status in rural India. The survey is household rather than school based to include as many children as possible. This way, even those children who have never been to school or dropped out early are included. In 2016 the survey reached 17,473 villages, covering 350,232 households and 562,305 children aged 3-16 (ASER 2016:43). ASER assesses basic reading and arithmetic skills and its findings have been alarming. Though there have been slight improvements when compared to 2014, basic reading levels remain low and somewhat disheartening. In 2016, only 4.6% of all fifth graders were able to read and comprehend a text for second graders without any mistakes (:52).

Concerning arithmetic, the numbers are even worse. From all third graders, 9.3% could not even recognize numbers 1-9, 35.6% could recognize numbers up to 99 but couldn’t do subtraction, 19.2% could do subtraction but couldn’t do division and only 8.4% of the children were able to divide (:53). It is important to keep in mind though, that the survey has only been conducted in rural areas so far. The performance level in bigger

²³ Aser is a Hindu word meaning impact. It also stands for Annual Status of Education Report (for more information visit www.asercentre.org).

cities should be decidedly higher because of the multitude of private and international schools.

Concerning the quality of their education, government schools are not able to live up to the high numbers of students. It is unfortunately not an exception for government primary schools to have just one or two teachers being responsible for all the five classes. Among these teachers, teacher absenteeism is a common phenomenon (Subramanian 2016:8). Especially in very remote locations, this problematic trend will continue to worsen because it is here that not only government schools struggle to find qualified teachers, but “even private schools catering to low-income background [students] find it difficult to attract competent teachers because neither the pay is good nor is it a matter of pride to teach the socio-economically marginalised children” (Subramanian 2016:9).

In the bigger cities, depending on the particular state, 60-90% of all students are consequently enrolled in private schools. It is comprehensible that parents want the best possible education for their children, but the growing number of private schools is jointly responsible for increases in the socio-economic disparities in India.

Looking at these numbers, the right to free, proper quality education for all children remains not more than a farce, particularly since quality and learning successes are non-actionable.

3.9 Conclusion

When looking at the current situation of Dalit women in India, many questions concerning their empowerment remain unanswered, especially when it comes to its interrelation with education. Can an educational system with such an alarmingly big gap between learning successes in private and government schools actually empower the poorest of the poor? What is the effect of going to a public school until 12th standard when compared to receiving education up until 5th standard or less?

The following three chapters provide detailed answers to these questions as they introduce the research design and methodology of the study at hand. The empirical research findings as well as a discussion and conclusion of the findings are also presented.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Field research aims at answering the research question through the collection of information outside the workplace or library. In the presented study, empirical methods of qualitative research were implemented, based on Mouton's "Three Worlds Theory" (Mouton 2001:137-143). In the current chapter, the research design and research methodology will be outlined, including a description of the methodological framework, an introduction to semi-structured guideline interviews, an outline of the sampling frame and techniques, as well as the grounded theory. The following sections give an overview of the field of practice, the empirical data collection, a reflection on the data collection process, as well as the data analysis. The chapter closes with ethical considerations concerning this study. Research findings can be found in Chapter 5, followed by a discussion and recommendations in Chapter 6.

4.2 Research Design

The research design of a study is the framework used to answer the research question. It depicts a set of methods and practices used to collect and analyse measures of the variables stated in the research problem. Depending on the research question, quantitative or qualitative methods may be suitable. Since the presented study aimed at attaining an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, information concerning the research question were gathered through qualitative means; that is, semi-structured guideline interviews.

4.3 Research Methodology

To achieve reliable and valid results, the methodology of this study is twofold. As a theoretical framework, a literature review has been done to position this research within the already existing body of knowledge²⁴. Secondary literature has been consulted, including recently published articles and books, reports, essays as well as conference

²⁴ See chapter 2 and 3 of this paper.

proceedings. Emphasis lies on the field research though, which depicts the second part of the study. A detailed description of the research methodology will be presented and discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.3.1 Methodological Framework

The methodological framework of the current study is based on Faix' "Empirical Praxis Cycle" (Faix 2007:64). It is grounded in sub-processes, such as observing, experimenting, sampling and evaluating, thereby making the research process cyclic rather than linear. The EPC does not follow a straight pattern but tries to link theory and praxis constantly (Faix 2003:69). This means that there is no rigidly fixed research aim, but instead a research idea that can change within the praxis cycle (:69).

The EPC is divided into three major epistemological contexts: (1) the context of discovery, (2) the context of justification and (3) the context of application (Faix 2007:64-65). Faix (2012) points out that the three contexts should be integrated into the research process (:9). In fact, the research process should

not be reduced to one phase since far-reaching decisions and interpretations are met in the various phases and inferences are thus automatically given for the other phases. This can also happen in cyclic repetitions so that the researcher, depending on the results, can change from the justifications context to the discovery context again. The search for realisations and results is not about developing a theory for the sake of a theory, but about the interplay between field practice and scientific practice (:9).

The methodology for the present study also integrates Mouton's "Three World Theory". When comparing his framework to Faix' EPC, the context of discovery can be linked to Mouton's idea of World 1. Here, research begins with real incidents of the common-sense world: a problem is detected and becomes the starting point of the particular research (Faix 2012:1). World 1 is not only research's starting point though, but, at the same time, its end. The research process is thus cyclic in that it lets its results flow back into the research praxis (:2). The second world of Mouton's research process describes the methodological and methodical implementation. Looking at the problem, a methodological approach is being developed with regard to the research question as well as the reflection and application of World 3. This third world depicts the epistemological research framework. It consists of reflections on the nature of science and asks two questions: 1) what is the nature of reality? (objective/subjective and

measurable) and 2) what is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? (:3).

The following figure shall demonstrate the interconnection of the three worlds graphically:

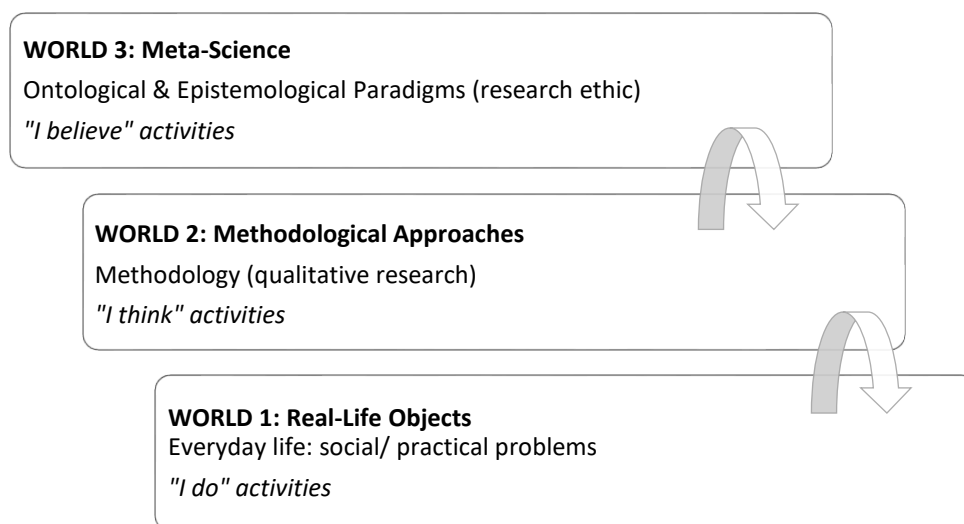


Figure 4.1: Mouton's "Three World Theory" (Mouton 2001:137-143)

Applied to the present study, World 1 encompasses the observation and realisation of the striking inequalities and the glaring disempowerment of Dalit women in India. Out of this problem, a methodological way of approaching this problem had to be developed (World 2). Since the current study aimed to attain an in-depth understanding of human behaviour, a qualitative research paradigm is embedded in this study. While quantitative methods are focused on objective, countable and measurable parameters and try to depict facts like magnitudes or probabilities, objects of qualitative research cannot be captured through measurement (Faix 2012:4-5; Helfferich 2011:21). When looking at the study at hand, an understanding of the influence of public secondary school education on the empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India, cannot be adequately achieved through quantitative research. Qualitative methods, however, examine the *why* and *how* of human behaviour and decision making, not just the *what*, *when*, *where*, or *who*. Contexts and subjective realities are enquired about, leaving room for diverging statements. Also, qualitative research goes into depths with smaller samples rather than identifying broader contexts through larger samples (Faix 2012:6).

The aim of qualitative research is discovery and theory construction, meaning that knowledge is increased through the collection of facts (Faix 2008:8). The *modus operandi* is inductive: conclusions are drawn from individual instances to broader generalizations (:69). The subjective reality of a person is assessed, analysed, interpreted and a (more or less) general rule is derived from the insights gained. Information is thus produced only on the actual cases studied; any more general conclusions are deemed propositions.

In contrast to quantitative research, the reflexivity of the researcher plays a substantial role in the practical implementation of qualitative research (Faix 2012:6). Objectivity in the strict sense of the word is no practicable criterion in qualitative research. However, a critical and reflective handling and a productive usage of the researcher's subjectivity is required (Helfferich 2011:160).

Qualitative social research encompasses a broad range of methods, most of them using linguistic data, such as interviews and group discussions. In the field of qualitative research, the variety of interview types is so immense that Helfferich (2011) describes it as "impressive and confusing at the same time," since interview designations are not used uniformly (:35-36). For the presented study, semi-structured guideline interviews were chosen, which will be described in more detail in the following section.

4.3.2 Semi-structured guideline interviews

In the current study, qualitative research was done through semi-structured guideline interviews. This type of interview qualifies for the reconstruction of subjective forms of common knowledge, it guarantees maximum openness during the interview and gives the interviewer the possibility to gear into the narration of the person being interviewed (Kurz & Kubek 2013:76).

Before conducting an interview, all aspects of interest need to be pre-formulated as questions. Questions are then arranged in a guideline interview. Proceeding in such a way guarantees that all aspects considered relevant are actually going to be addressed in the interview itself. It also ensures a general comparability between the different interviews (Schreier 2003:58). The wording of the questions in a semi-structured

guideline interview is alterable and its order can and should be adjusted to the course of the conversation (:58).

The interviews were conducted with 12 female Dalits in the state of Andhra Pradesh, South India. A valid sample size ranges from 12-30; the size may vary and depends on the point in time when theoretical saturation has occurred (Walden University 2015:27). Interestingly,

only one study has currently investigated saturation in a quantifiable way, by examining the point in data collection at which codes were created and the point at which the distribution of code frequency stabilized (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). In this study, no new codes emerged after 12 interviews; in fact, basic codes were present as early as six interviews (Walden University 2015:27).

4.3.3 Sampling frame and techniques

In any research, be it qualitative or quantitative, it is of utmost relevance, which sample is used as the basis of the research. While quantitative research tries to avoid distortion through random samples, qualitative research aims at the exact opposite (Kelle & Kluge 2010:42). Central criterion here is the depiction of variance and relevant heterogeneity. To construct a suitable qualitative sample, methods of criterion-controlled sample selections are applied, in order to incorporate all cases relevant for the research question (:43, 55).

The women participating in the interviews were chosen according to the so called selective sampling strategy, where the experiment design is limited from the outset. It is a sampling strategy that can be applied when the researcher has a certain knowledge about his or her area of study already. Thus, “the decision on sampling is made prior to the beginning of the study according to a preconceived, but reasonable, set of criteria” that emanates from the researcher’s guiding assumptions (Neergaard & Uhløi 2007:259; Piercy & Sprenkle 2005:47). While constructing a qualitative sample design, it is necessary to pay attention to certain specifications before the data is actually gathered. According to Kelle & Kluge (2010) these specifications are related to relevant characteristics concerning the case selection, the feature characteristic, and the size of the qualitative sample (:50). Features that are not relevant for the particular research problem may be neglected (:41). Which characteristics are of relevance depends on the research question, theoretical preliminary considerations, and the previous knowledge of the experimental field. Classical sociodemographic characteristics include age, job,

educational attainment and the social class to which one belongs (:51). Relevant combinations of characteristics should be included as much as possible so that hitherto unknown phenomena can be identified and new categories and typologies developed (:55).

Below, the qualitative sample design of the current study is depicted tabularly. The aforementioned characteristics were chosen and expanded by two additional characteristics, including “nationality” and “place of residence”. The category “job” was not included, since it represents a characteristic not relevant as sampling criterion for the current research question.

Table 4.1: Qualitative sample design "educated/uneducated Dalit women"

NATIONALITY	Indian	All participants had to be of Indian nationality and be a citizen of India.
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Andhra Pradesh	All participants had to live in Andhra Pradesh to minimize distortion through different schooling systems.
GENDER	Female	All participants must be female, since women in India are, on average, less empowered than men.
CASTE AFFILIATION	Dalit / Scheduled Caste	In accordance with the research question, all participants had to be Dalits.
AGE RANGE	20 - 35	To achieve valid results, the participants had to be out of school for a minimum of two years and thus had to be at least 20 years old. Due to different schooling methods, the women shouldn't be older than 35 years.
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No education or school enrolment up to 5th standard ▪ Successful completion of 12th standard 	<p>Half of the women had to have no education or should not have attended school longer than 5th grade.</p> <p>The other half of the participants had to successfully complete 12th standard.</p>

The interviewees selected for this study therefore had to be Indian women between 20 and 35 years, belonging to the Scheduled Caste and living in Andhra Pradesh, India. Half of them had to have no education or should not have attended school longer than 5th grade. The other half needed to have successfully completed 12th standard. The participants of the latter group were former students of Indienhilfe²⁵.

Interviews were conducted by a local woman who understands cultural norms and behaviours and also interprets them correctly. She is fluent in Telegu and Tamil as well as in English and was trained by the primary researcher in how to best conduct interviews. All interviews were recorded and the data collected were then translated into English, analysed, structured and finally coded with MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software based on grounded theory.

4.3.4 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory (GT) is a research methodology in the field of social sciences. It was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 and forms the basis for the study at hand. In contrast to most other research methodologies, GT operates inductively, constructing a theory through the analysis of data (Reichertz 2010:214). Research in GT usually begins with a question and the collection of qualitative data. The question guides the researcher through the research process as the data is reviewed and scanned for repeated ideas and concepts. Overlapping elements are then tagged with so called codes²⁶. As more and more data are collected and re-reviewed, these codes are clustered into concepts and then into categories. Out of these categories, a new theory may emerge. GT is thus quite different from other research methodologies. While traditional models of research choose an already existing theoretical framework and start the collection of data afterwards to verify the theory under study, GT aims at the construction of new theories.

²⁵ Indienhilfe is a Christian NGO that grants socially disadvantaged children in India holistic development. Half of the Dalit women interviewed are former students of the Indienhilfe.

²⁶ Codes depict superordinate concepts for a phenomenon and comprise words, sentences, segments or whole documents (Breuer 2009:80; Kuckartz 2005:78).

GT can be applied to many different socio-scientific surveys, since it does not follow a rigid process. Instead, it contains a multitude of different propositions that have proved expedient for theory construction (Strübing 2008:7). The flexible choice of methodologies permits the researcher to do justice to the respective contexts of research (:17). This, however, does not mean that one should deregulate his or her working methods. It is, on the contrary, important to stick to some fundamental rules²⁷ (Strauss 1991:33).

When applying GT, the fundamental aim is the generation and verification of a theory based on the collected data, thereby making it possible to approach social phenomena in depth. Change is a constant element of social life. This processual aspect of social interaction shapes the style of research in GT, with the researcher being not only an agent but also a subject of research (:30).

In the study at hand, data was collected through semi-structured guideline interviews that later on served the generation of a new theory (in this case concerning the impact of secondary school education on the empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India).

4.4 Field of practice

The following section comprises the practical implementation of this research study. It will first give an overview of the preparation of the data collection and close with a reflection of the interviewer's role.

4.4.1 Preparation of data collection

Compiling suitable interview guides with regard to the research question is not only necessary, but of central importance for the whole study and its validity. Helfferich (2011) recommends following the so-called SPSS²⁸ principle while constructing the

²⁷ These rules comprise the coding and writing of analytical memos (Strübing 2008:17), as well as the processes of contrasting and theoretical sampling (Faix 2007:78).

²⁸ SPSS is a German abbreviation that literally translated stands for collecting, testing, sorting and subsuming (Helfferich 2011:182-185).

guideline interviews for a study (:35; 182-185). Its aim is to collect as many answers as possible to the question “What do I want to know?” in a first step. The list is then reduced in the second step: all questions are tested and filtered for those aiming solely at factual information, the questions that are not posed openly enough or those which only confirm already existing knowledge (:35). The uncensored collection of questions is thus followed by an intentional detachment of this diversity of questions. The third step implies the sorting and bundling of the remaining questions in order of different aspects (such as time and content). The aim of the last step is to find so called ‘invitations for narrating’, which will then be subsumed under the aspects just mentioned (:185).

Just as Helfferich’s SPSS principle, the EPC also knows an explorative preliminary assessment, called pretest. According to Faix (2007), this test run serves the achievement of more clarity on the problem statement (:138). Typically, the pretest does not only serve the revision of the interview guides but the interviewing process itself is supposed to be practiced on a test person. For the study at hand, two interview guides had to be developed: one for the Dalit women who received none or very little schooling and the other one for those Dalit women who successfully completed 12th standard. The key questions for both interview guides were developed in accordance with the co-researcher, who also conducted the interviews on behalf of the primary researcher. The interview guides were both tested on the respective Dalit women. Since there was nothing that suggested a need for change, the interviews of the pretest were included in the actual sample.

The following table exemplary shows the interview guide for the Dalit women who received zero to five years of schooling. The interview guide for the Dalit women with 12 years of schooling as well as Tamil translations for the interview guides can be found in the appendix.

Table 4.2: Questionnaire Dalit women - up to 5th standard

THEME	KEY QUESTIONS	OPTIONAL QUESTIONS
<i>Opening Question</i>	<p>Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this interview. In the next hour, I am going to ask you several questions concerning your life. Some of them may be a bit personal. Please remember that you are always free to not answer them and/or discontinue the interview without having to give any reasons.</p> <p>Now my first question concerns the interview itself: can you tell me, why you decided to participate?</p>	
The interview	What are your expectations/hopes/wishes with regard to the interview?	
	What is your husband's (father's/brother's) opinion on the interview?	What was his/their reaction? Does he/do they approve of it?
School	At which age did you start going to school?	If there was no school enrolment at all: why didn't you go to school?
	Who in your family decided that you should (shouldn't) go to school and why?	What was/is your parent's/family's opinion on schooling? Who was against it and who was for it? For what reasons?
	What did your relatives and neighbours think of you (not) attending school?	
	Who (else) in your family went to school?	Did all your siblings attend school? What about your parents? If they went to school, do you know for how long?
	What are your parents' jobs? What is their social (caste) background?	
	What did your day look like after school? In case of no school enrolment: What did a normal day look like when you were a kid?	How much time did you have for your homework? What were your tasks (in the household)? When did you go to bed? When did you get up again?
	Were your tasks (after school) different from those of your brothers (siblings)? If yes, in how far?	How did it make you feel that your brothers (siblings) were treated differently?
	Who decided that you should attend school only until xy th standard?	How long would you have liked to go to school?
	Concerning school enrolment - was there a difference between you and your brothers (siblings)?	If yes, please describe in how far it was different.
	Looking back – how did you like school? / How was the experience of going to school for you? In case of no school enrolment: Looking back – how did you like your childhood?	Did the caste or background of the parents make a difference in how students were treated in school by teachers or other students? If yes, how exactly? What differences between you and girls from other castes did you notice/experience?
	What were the gains of attending school and what did you learn for life?	
	Were there any negative experiences connected to school? Which?	

Self-reported attitude changes	What difference does education make in your life?	Do you maybe see things differently than other women with a similar background? Do you feel more valued and respected? If it didn't make any difference: what do you think could be the reason for that?
	In case of no school enrolment: What difference did the lack of education make in your life? How might your life be different if you had attended school (longer)?	
	How does the way you live and the position you have in society differ from your mother's when she was your age?	If there are differences – what do you think could be the reasons for this?
Employment situation	What do you do for a living?	If you're a housewife – what are your tasks? And would you like to work outside home?
	How was the job search?	Which difficulties did you encounter?
	How do you like your job?	How does your boss/colleagues treat you? If unkind/unfair: how do you react?
Family / Spending decisions	Who in your family decides on how to spend money/savings?	If it is the husband: how would you spend the money differently? In how far would you maybe decide differently when it comes to spending?
	What do you do when you disagree with your husband on spending decisions?	How often do you have arguments with him about that?
Sexuality/ Marriage/ Childbearing	Since when are you married?	If unmarried: are there any plans for a marriage in the near future? Who decides whom you are going to marry? If someone else: what is your opinion on arranged marriages?
	Who picked your husband?	If it was someone else: would you have liked to choose yourself?
	How does your husband treat you?	If unmarried: what is your opinion on a good marriage? How should a wife behave? How should a husband treat his wife?
	How do you feel your husband regards you?	As a possession? As a friend?
	Have you ever experienced physical violence?	If yes: How often does that happen? How do you react? Did you ever think about leaving your husband/family?
	How many children do you have?	If none: would you like to have children? When?
	Who decided about the number of children?	Your husband? Both together? Or was it your decision alone?
	What is your opinion on contraceptives?	Have you ever used any contraceptives? If not: why is that so? (is it your own wish or does your husband not approve?) Have you ever thought about using contraceptives/would you like to use them?
	If you have a son: do you treat him differently from your daughter(s)? If yes, why?	If not, please explain why you treat them the same.

	What do you think about the education of your children?	If childless: how would you like to educate your children?
	What is your vision/dream for the future of your children?	Do you believe that they can have a different/better life?
Physical mobility	How often a day do you leave the house? What do you leave it for and where do you go?	
	Who decides on how often you leave the house and where you go?	
	Can you move around alone?	If not, please explain why.
	How do you move around when you go somewhere else (e.g. for purchases or when visiting relatives or friends)?	By bus/auto/train/car or do you walk?
	How far (and to which places) have you moved from your home during the past month? For which reasons?	
	What are your experiences with moving around (alone) as a woman?	Do you feel insecure? Have you ever been harassed?
Engagement with collective action and politics	What do you think about voting?	What do you think about women voting?
	When was the last time you voted?	Who decided what party you should vote for?
<i>Closing question</i>	Did we forget something that you would like to add?	We talked a lot about school and your marriage. Maybe there is something else that is on your mind?

4.4.2 Reflection of the interviewer's role

I (the primary researcher) have visited India four times in my life and lived in the country for a longer period twice. From September 2008 – August 2009 I stayed in Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and from March - August 2013 in New Delhi, India's capital. I have thus experienced both North and South India and was able to gain some first insights in the Indian culture and their way of living. Though I learned to react in a culturally adapted way in most circumstances, my understanding of the Indian culture is still very limited. The country is simply too vast, too multifaceted and too complex for a Westerner to fully comprehend it. Differences in perception, speech and appearance should not be underestimated. Situations and social contexts can be misinterpreted easily, often without even realising it.

For the reasons just mentioned, I hence chose to work together with an English speaking Indian woman, who conducted the interviews for me. She was, much more than I, able

to approach the Dalit women in a culturally sensitive way and react to them appropriately.

Concerning my methodological background knowledge, I acquired some basic skills in the module ‘research methodology’ of my studies. There, methods for data collection and analysis were conveyed (e.g. the data analysis programme ‘MAXQDA’) that are applied in academic writing, project planning, monitoring, as well as evaluation. Beside qualitative methods (for example the conduction and analysis of qualitative interviews), quantitative methods were introduced. Furthermore, concepts and methods of interdisciplinary research were conveyed and the choice of methods within empirical research exercised. In addition, I had to conduct semi-structured interviews (including sampling methods, a pretest, coding and analysis), which led to a more practical understanding of qualitative social research.

4.5 Empirical data collection

The following section gives an overview of the data collection. The sample design, the documentation of the data collection as well as the transcription rules will be outlined below.

4.5.1 Determining the sample design

As already discussed in chapter 4.3.3, it must to be ensured that the interviewees present theoretical relevant combinations concerning their characteristics. The selection criteria of the participants were determined before the data collection while the data were analysed only after the collection. In this way, it was ensured that the sample design was equipped with valid characteristics to result in a saturated sample.

Table 4.3 shows the assembly of interview partners including the relevant indicators.

Table 4.3: Sample Design "Uneducated Women"

Name/ Indicator	UW1	UW2	UW3	UW4	UW5	UW6
Nationality	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian
Place of residence	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	29	30	23	35	29	28
Caste affiliation	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit
Educational attainments	1st standard (without completing it)	Completion of 5th standard	Completion of 5th standard	2nd standard (without completing it)	Completion of 5th standard	Completion of 5th standard (entering into 6th)

Table 4.4: Sample Design "Educated Women"

Name/ Indicator	EW1	EW2	EW3	EW4	EW5	EW6
Nationality	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian	Indian
Place of residence	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	31	31	26	28	25	27
Caste affiliation	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit	Dalit
Educational attainments	Completion of 12 th standard; B.Sc. in Nursing	Completion of 12 th standard; Master of Education	Completion of 12 th standard; CPC (Certified Professiona l Coder)	Completion of 12 th standard; B.Sc. in Nursing	Completion of 12 th standard; Under Graduate, aiming for Post Graduate	Completion of 12 th standard; B.Sc. in Physio Therapy, aiming for M.Sc. in Physio Therapy

4.5.2 Selection and interviewing process

The women with at least 12 years of education were selected by the head of “Indienhilfe”, whereas the women with less education were chosen by the secondary-researcher, who herself is the leader of a NGO called SUCHI (Social Unit for Community Health and Improvement). The selection of the places where the interviews should be conducted was done in discussion with the joint researcher.

For the interviews with the more educated women, half of the participants were visited at home, the other three were met in the hostel, where they received their school education. The places were thus known to them and a safe environment was ensured. The interviews with the less educated women were all conducted at SUCHI’s main office, a neutral place close to the villages where the interviewees live.

A plan was developed for the dates on which the participants could be interviewed. The appointments for the interviews were made by the co-researcher and her staff, as well as the wardens of the “Indienhilfe” hostel. All interviews were audio recorded, translated into English by the co-researcher and then transcribed by the primary researcher. The data analysis process started as soon as the first data was collected, using the computer software MAXQDA.

4.5.3 Transcription guidelines

To ensure an exact transcription of the interviews, the following transcription guidelines were followed at all times.

Table 4 5: Transcription guidelines according to Empirica Institute²⁹

(.)	Short break
(...)	Long break (more than 4 seconds)
mhm	Break filler, sign of reception
Yes, DEFINITELY	Words or syllables that are particularly stressed are written in CAPITAL LETTERS
=	loops, quick connections, stammering
-	Abrupt wording or sentence break
{same time...}	Simultaneous talking, overlaps, interference
:	Prolongation
(laughing), (coughing)	Nonverbal features etc.
(?meaning)	Incomprehensible talk
{mhm, yeah}	Contribution of the counterpart during the speech of the other communicator

4.5.4 Reflection of the data collection process

As it is crucial to document the whole process of data collection in GT, the following section reports and explains all incidents and detections that were made while interviewing the 12 Dalit women. Since each discovery can influence and change the subsequent process of research, it was not only reflected on its development but shortcomings, peculiarities and distinctive features that might be of importance for the ongoing research or final outcome were also evaluated.

As none of the key questions were changed after the conduction of the pre-tests, the results of both pre-tests were included into the data pool, particularly because the answers contained valid information.

Since the researchers hoped that the Dalit women would be less biased and more open to express their feelings in the presence of an Indian woman, all interviews were conducted by the co-researcher, who herself belongs to the Scheduled Caste. The

²⁹ For further information please visit: <http://www.institut-empirica.de/>

primary researcher was, however, present at nine out of 12 interviews. The very first interview (EW1) as well as the interviews of EW3 and EW4 were conducted by the co-researcher alone. The decision to let the co-researcher conduct the first interview alone was not only a wish expressed on her side, but also considered by the primary researcher to be best. The interviews of EW3 and EW4 were conducted without the primary researcher solely due to travel reasons. Since the first interview went very well, it was decided that the primary researcher would be present for the next interview. As hoped for, EW2 felt comfortable in the interview environment and did not seem to be influenced in her opinion by the primary researcher's presence. The primary researcher thus joined the co-researcher for all other interviews as well. Again, all women seemed to feel comfortable and did not appear to give biased answers or statements. The only exception was EW6, who spoke very reluctantly and seemed to be uncomfortable with the presence of the primary researcher. Her statements and answers might therefore be biased or not as detailed as they might have been had only the co-researcher been present.

Throughout all interviews conducted with the less educated Dalit women, their ignorance of important dates in their lives was noted. Many did not know their exact birthday, at which age they were sent to school, for how long they were married or how old their children were. The researchers thus accepted more vague responses from these participants, rather than more thorough reports. Throughout the interviews, it was also determined that some of the questions were unclear to several of the less educated women; the co-researcher had to rephrase the questions several times during the interviews. However, since there was no discernible pattern in which questions were particularly unclear, none of the questions were changed.

4.6 Data analysis

For analysing the data of this study, the software programme MAXQDA was used. It is an analysis software based on GT that allows one to organise, analyse and visualise all forms of data that can be collected electronically.

Looking at the immensity of the collected data, it is crucial to select relevant segments out of the data pool in order to analyse them thoroughly and come to a conclusion linked to the initial research question (Breuer 2009:79). The selection is done through coding,

a method where recorded phenomena are assigned to (superordinate) concepts (:69). The process of coding does not unfold linearly, but through a constant seesaw of data acquisition, concept formation, model testing and a reflection on how the knowledge was obtained (:69). In this way, a data based theory ideally evolves at the end of the process. Coding is the heart and centrepiece of GT and is divided into three basic types that will be explained in the following subsections.

4.6.1 Open Coding

In open coding the researcher breaks up, analyses, compares and categorises the collected data for the very first time (Faix 2007:92). While sifting through the data step-by-step, codes are being set which describe, name or classify the phenomena under consideration. The pool of data is segmented into meaningful expressions to find main ideas, develop preliminary concepts and compare them for relations, similarities and dissimilarities (Strauss & Corbin 1996:145). The coding process is done in three steps: deduction, induction, and abduction. In deduction, a theoretical category from the questionnaire is extrapolated on the empirical material.

Induction, on the other hand, is about examining the interviews without specification of theory-based categories. Codes are analysed for similarities and then grouped into categories based on their common features (Khandkar 2015:1). This process is repeated several times. As the researcher goes back and forth and more and more data is coded, categories are compared, fused into new concepts and eventually renamed and adapted (Holton 2010:265). Induction thus makes it possible to find new concepts that emerge from the raw data and were not provided before.

In abduction, the researcher attaches importance to single statements that might be suitable for forming a new category. In contrast to the inductive procedure, there are no other comparable propositions. Though they cannot be assigned to already existing categories, the statements still seem to be of importance for the whole research study, the research question and the results so far. The statements are thus taken and hypotheses formed which are examined several times until a separate category or subcategory is built (Faix 2007:162).

In doing so, a multitude of codes will evolve eventually, making it possible to identify certain phenomena and bundle them theoretically in categories (Breuer 2009:81). Its

features need be analysed by the researcher in more detail later. The goal of open coding is the building of a multidimensional, descriptive, preliminary framework for later analysis. Since it is built directly from the raw data, the process itself ensures the validity of the study (Khandkar 2015:2).

4.6.2 Axial Coding

Generally, axial coding follows the process of open coding. However, Strauss & Corbin (1996) point out the possibility to begin the process of axial coding parallel to open coding (:77). Axial coding involves the systematisation of the already generated codes through determining connections between a category and its sub-category (:76). In that way, the elaborated categories are correlated and then newly compiled.

Strauss & Corbin propose to use the following categories for axial coding:

- (1) Phenomenon: depicts the central incident/phenomenon under study (:79).
- (2) Causal conditions: refer to the incidents that lead to the occurrence or to the development of the phenomenon (:79).
- (3) Context: depicts those characteristics that belong to the phenomenon (e.g. the arrangement of incidents and events), but also those conditions under which the incidents happen (:81).
- (4) Intervening conditions: are the broad and general conditions that influence the action and interactional strategies. These conditions contain: time, space, culture, socioeconomic status, technical status, career, history and the individual biography (:82).
- (5) Action and interactional strategies: are those strategies that deal with or execute a phenomenon (:76). In axial coding, these actions and interactions need to have the following characteristics: 1) they need to be processual, 2) they are purpose- and goal-oriented with regard to the phenomenon and 3) the question concerning a lack of action/interaction and its cause need to be asked (Faix 2007:93).
- (6) Consequences: each of the just mentioned actions provoke consequences, which are rarely intended and can mostly not be predicted. According to Strauss and Corbin (1996), they therefore need to be sought in the theoretical sampling. 'Consequences' in axial coding are either people, places or things (:85).

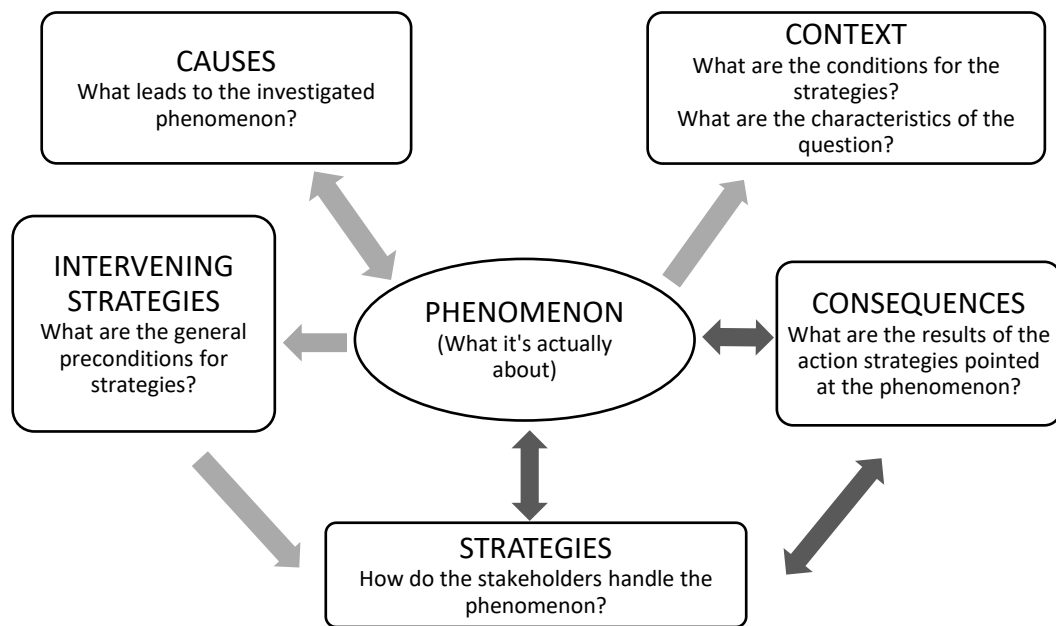


Figure 4.2: Paradigm Coding Model (Source: Faix 2007:94)

4.6.3 Selective Coding

When going through the results of axial coding, central phenomena should be captured. However, due to the amplitude of results, the research question is often lost sight of. To centre the chief phenomenon again, core categories are built and defined in selective coding (Faix 2007:95). In doing so, the decision for a certain core category ultimately reflects the central theme of the data content (e.g. in an interview). The remaining categories are not redundant, however. Rather, they are arranged around the core category and linked up with it.

Selective coding takes place at a higher level of theorisation than axial coding and helps to sum up the results concisely.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical research refers to “the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process” (Edwards & Mauthner 2012:14). It comprises the application of the following four internationally recognized moral

principles of ethics (not ranked in any particular order), which are also addressed in the consent form for participation (UNISA 2014:10):

- (1) Autonomy (the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants should be respected in research)
- (2) Beneficence (research should aim at making a positive contribution towards the welfare of people)
- (3) Non-maleficence (research participants in particular or people in general should not be harmed through research)
- (4) Justice (in research, any benefits or risks should be fairly distributed among people)

Other fundamental ethical principles are objectivity, honesty, integrity, carefulness, openness, the respect for intellectual property, confidentiality and responsible publication (Resnik 2015:para.14-18).

From the design stage to the publication of the research study, ethical issues arise frequently. It is therefore every researcher's duty to be aware of their possible emergence and thus guard oneself against any bias, be it in data analysis and interpretation or in experimental design. Furthermore, unpublished data, methods or results should not be used and confidential information needs to be protected at any time (Resnik 2015:para.19). There are also more subtle forms of ethical considerations, such as the question of conducting covert or overt research or where to draw the line between plagiarism and "common knowledge" (Penslar 1995:xiii).

With regard to the participants of the current study, the researchers had to ensure that the Dalit women's rights, their anonymity and their welfare were at no point in time being harmed. This also included the protection of the women's dignity as human beings, especially when it came to ensuring their voluntary and informed consent. The women were informed orally, as well as in written form about their rights as interviewees. They were then asked to sign the informed consent form and were free to discontinue the interview at any given time. Each woman had the right to participate without coercion and to withdraw from research at all times without giving any reasons, since all information collected was provided to the researcher on the basis of trust and confidentiality (Mouton 2001:243).

Dalit women fall under the category of so called “vulnerable participants” and special arrangements need to be made when involving them in research. Vulnerable participants are:

children (i.e. those individuals under the age of 18 years), the elderly, pregnant women, people with a cognitive or mental impairment, prisoners or people on parole, students, people living with HIV/AIDS, people in dependent relationships, people with disabilities, socio-economically disadvantaged people, indigenous people and indigents (UNISA 2014:3).

To protect the women from facing any harm through the interviews, their rights, feelings and interests were of highest priority. Collecting very personal information can sometimes be painful to the participants. All necessary steps were therefore taken to ensure that no form of social prejudice was being reinforced through the research.

The women were informed that all necessary steps were taken to ensure that their anonymity is protected at any time and that they were always free to discontinue the interview.

Interviews were conducted by the co-researcher, a local woman who understands cultural norms and behaviours and who can interpret them correctly. The questions were asked with empathy and sensitivity and the women had time to express their emotions, postpone the interview or withdraw from the research without having to give any reason.

Time and place of the interview was in an environment the interviewees knew and where they felt safe.

The importance of the participants’ well-being was acknowledged at any given time. Account was taken of specific local cultural and religious values. Anything traditionally sacred was respected; also, the women were treated as unique subjects within the context of their community systems (UNISA 2014:11).

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the data analysis and first findings of the research investigation. First, the results of open coding are presented, giving an insight on the MAXQDA programme, as well as illustrations of the code system. Subsequently, the findings of Axial Coding are presented, bringing the different categories in correlation with each other. Furthermore, comprehensive evaluations of all 12 interviews are included. Finally, the results of selective coding are re-contextualized with the previous findings and then linked back to the initial research question.

5.2 Results of the coding

In data analysis, the actual theory work and the reflection of the research objectives (hypotheses) begins. The analysis of the data has to be viewed within the overall context of the research cycle and should not be detached from the method applied so far. In the study at hand, grounded theory has been applied as described in chapter 4.3.4. Coding depicts the core process of grounded theory and its most important results will be displayed in the following subsections to illustrate the process of theory construction step by step.

In the first and second round of open coding, categories and subcategories were built using the modes of deduction, induction and abduction. By means of open coding, the results of these processes shall be depicted in the following subsection.

5.2.1 Findings of open coding

As previously stated, the 12 transcribed interviews were deductively, inductively and abductively searched for codes. Gradually main themes, categories as well as subcategories emerged. The basic categories followed the leading questions of the survey and were expanded and supplemented through open coding. The initial seven core categories were:

1. Education
2. Self-reported attitude changes
3. Employment situation
4. Family spending decisions
5. Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing
6. Physical mobility
7. Engagement with collective action and politics

Since new categories were formed with each interview, it was necessary to deductively search for these new categories in all 12 interviews again. In doing so, a system of 1310 codes emerged, including three new main categories:

8. Living in a patriarchal society
9. Living in a collectivistic society
10. Empowerment

The final codesystem, including all subcategories, is depicted in the following chart. Each category and subcategory is followed by the number of codings it contains. Black numbers represent the actual amount of codes a single category encompasses, whereas golden numbers include the codings of its respective subcategories as well.

Codesystem (1310)

Education (390)

- Time after school/responsibilities as a child in the household (23)
 - Domestic chores/no time to study (16)
 - Time to play, relax and study (7)
- Schooling experience (25)
 - Positive (19)
 - Negative (1)
 - Mixed experiences (5)
- Lack of school education (73)
 - Reasons for school dropout (16)
- Attitude towards early school dropout (8)
 - Family's and neighbour's opinion on school dropout (5)
 - Against school dropout (2)
 - Supportive of/indifferent towards school dropout (3)
 - Self-assessment concerning the lack of school education (27)
- Indifference/lacking opinion about social questions (8)
- Indifference/ignorance towards dates and numbers (9)

- Received school education (25)
- Family's and neighbours' opinion about sending a girl to school (9)
 - Positive (6)
 - Negative (3)
- Gains/benefits from education (16)
- Difference between the educated and uneducated (21)
- Personal opinion on the importance of education (35)
- Educational attainments (16)
- Personal aspirations concerning education (8)
- Family and education (136)
 - Parents' education and job situation (31)
 - Finances and education (5)
 - Parents' influence on education (39)
 - Hampering (10)
 - Supportive (26)
 - Neutral (1)
 - Directive (2)
 - Education and future of the women's children (36)
 - Husband's education and job (6)
 - Education of the siblings (19)
- Hostel life (28)
 - Difference between the hostel and regular schools (11)
 - Warden's influence on education (2)
 - Spirituality in the hostel (10)
 - Homesickness (5)
- Self-reported attitude changes (101)**
 - Things learned for life (13)
 - Personal change through education (12)
 - Personal assessment about the differences in received education (35)
 - Respect through education (14)
 - Comparison of the mother's situation at the same age (27)
 - Better off (23)
 - Worse off (4)
- Employment situation (109) / (23)**
 - Financial situation (16)
 - Domestic chores (10)
 - Attitude towards the job (10)
 - Positive (9)
 - Negative (1)
 - Getting into the job (11)
 - Treatment at work (10)
 - Good (6)
 - Bad (4)

Child labour (12)
Labour work³⁰ (17)

Family spending decisions (34)

Independent decision taking/along with the husband (10)
Family/husband decides (15)

Differences in spending (9)

Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing (241)

Marriage (187)

Arranged marriage vs. love marriage (44)
(Pro) love marriage (4)
(Pro) arranged marriage (31) (40)
Forced to marry (4)
“Only then our life will be good” (5)

Age at marriage (9)
Family's and neighbour's opinion on early marriage (1)
Personal opinion on (early) marriage (12)
Role models husband – wife (38)
Liberal/Western (12)
Traditional/patriarchal (26)
Good husband = buys whatever is needed (8)
Importance of having a husband (6)
Treatment by the husband (37)
Respectful/caring (25)
Disrespectful/Domestic Violence (12)
Handling of decision and fights (16)
Alcohol dependency of the husband/father (5)
Marrying a relative (11)

Sexuality (15)

Contraceptives (15)

Pro (5)
Contra (5)
Ignorant/indifferent (5)

Children (39)

Importance of having a son/children (4)
Decision about no. children (15)
Independent decision taking/along with the husband (6)
Family/husband decides (9)
No. of children (12)
Check-ups during pregnancy (3)
Family planning surgery (5)

Physical mobility (44)

Restrictions in physical mobility (28)
Freedom to move around (16) / (15)
Family's and neighbour's opinion about moving around freely (1)

³⁰ Labour work stands for physical, mostly unskilled work with no guarantee of fair wages or permanent employment contracts.

- Engagement with collective action and politics (52)**
 - Personal opinion on voting and elections (26)
 - Influences on voting (13)
 - Reasons for voting (7)
 - Last voting (6)
- Living in a patriarchal society (152)**
 - Inferiority of women (91) / (1)
 - Different value of boys and girls in the Indian society (24)
 - Equal (2)
 - Different (22)
 - (Different) treatment/upbringing of boys and girls in the Indian society (46)
 - Equal (19)
 - Different (27)
 - Personal opinion on the different value/treatment of boys (46)
 - Women/wives = slaves (16)
 - Violence against women (17) / (6)
 - Sexual harassment (9)
 - DV – mothers (2)
- Living in a collectivistic society (139) / (54)**
 - Respecting the elders (14)
 - Expectations by the family (10)
 - Treatment by the in-laws (6)
 - Respectful/equally (1)
 - Disrespectful/Domestic Violence (5)
 - Refusal of the parents to support a love marriage (7)
 - Unwillingness to take up responsibility for the marriage (5)
 - Caste discrimination (19) / (18)
 - Hesitation to name the caste (1)
- Empowerment (48)**
 - Courage to speak up (8)
 - Being dependent/independent (16)
 - Influences in decision taking (14)

Figure 5.1: Final codesystem

When looking at the codesystem closer, two things become obvious:

1. As expected, the categories ‘education’ (390) and ‘marriage/ sexuality/ childbearing’ (241) comprise the majority of codes, since most questions were asked concerning these topics.
2. Surprisingly, the categories with the next larger amount of codes have been developed inductively and cannot be found on the questionnaire. Although aspects of ‘living in a patriarchal society’ (152) and ‘living in a collectivistic

society' (139) were not taken into account beforehand, the women mentioned them so frequently, that they were bundled together in new categories.

It remains to be seen, whether a causal relation between these four categories can be verified. The following sub-sections shall provide more insights into the data.

Dimensionality of codes through sub-categories and allotting weights

Sub-categories are important for the code system as they put emphasis and focus on the characteristics of each code. Forming new sub-categories is a process that gives the codes 'dimensionality' (Faix 2007:170). Dimensionality means that the researcher allots weights to the categories (e.g. negative – positive). The particular codes are then assigned into these subcategories. The category "role models husband - wife" for example, was split up into the subcategories 'liberal/Western' and 'traditional/patriarchal'. Distributing the codes into these subcategories facilitates the data analysis, as it quickly gives an overview of the codings: while "traditional/patriarchal" contains 26 codes, 'liberal/Western' comprises only 12 codes. This might already be an indication of the women's empowerment level and needs to be looked at more closely in further analysis. There are codes though, where adding dimensionality is not needed, for example when the codes are very similar. In these cases, the codes are given weights. In the current study, each code got a weight between 1-3, displaying the importance of the particular subcode within the sub-category. For example, the sub-category "Personal assessment about the differences in received education" contained 35 codes. Content-wise, they were quite similar, so that all 35 codes received weights. 19 statements got the highest weighting (3) and thus seem more significant than the other codes. They contain key information that might be vital for the further research process. For example, the statement "LOTS of difference is there. I am educated and working. Others see me and the difference that I'm going for work and earning. Those in my age group who have not studied got married and they have children and they are not working. They depend on others [...]" seemed more important than the statement "Maybe if I would have studied, my situation could have been changed".

Dimensionality is not only important for open coding though. It also plays a key role in ‘axial coding’, where connections between the codes are analysed and brought into bigger context.

Lexical analysis and ‘in-vivo coding’

According to Kuckartz (2005:130), lexical analysis is not the best way of qualitative text analysis and hence provides only limited information. Nevertheless, lexical analysis can give a good overview on either a single or all interviews and indicate towards key aspects and cross references. Following these, lexical analysis can be helpful before conducting axial coding.

The following table shows key words of the category “Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing”:

Table 5 1: Lexical analysis of the category “Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing”

Key word	Overall occurrence	In interviews
Marriage	67	12
Arranged	17	9
Bridegroom	13	6
Husband	263	12
Children	174	12
Fight(ing)	23	9
Hit(ting)	20	7

Looking at the table, it becomes clear that the key words of the category “Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing” are ‘husband’ and ‘children’, with husband being mentioned 263 times and children 174 times. The findings suggest that these topics are of vital importance to the women and, potentially, their empowerment. Yet, the results

of lexical analysis should only be assessed as indications, not definite and valid conclusion, since questions and statements of the co-researcher are intermixed in the analysed data. Moreover, the findings are of quantitative nature; a qualitative assessment about the substance of the statements cannot be made.

‘In-vivo coding’ is a term rooted in grounded theory. It depicts a method of coding, where a word, term or sentence of an interviewee is so remarkable that they are taken as codes. MAXQDA adds these statements as codes and simultaneously codes the documented passage.

In the present study, in-vivo coding has been applied twice. The first code was “Only then our life will be good”. It reappeared again and again, when several of the women were explaining why they preferred their parents to choose a husband for them. Since the wording was almost exactly the same in each statement, a new sub-category was developed via in-vivo coding.

The second code appeared when the women were talking about their idea of a good husband. Several of the women explained that their husband treats them well, because he buys them whatever they need or want. Again, this was a thought that had not been raised at all in the pre-considerations or the interview questions and was therefore coded via in-vivo coding.

Code-Matrix Browser

The Code-Matrix Browser is a tool that gives a good overview on the different interviews with regard to the frequency of codes in the different categories. The results are of importance for the process of axial coding and the interpretation of the further results. The main points of correlation will be depicted in descending order in the following table.

Table 5.2: Findings of the Code-Matrix-Browser

Interviewee	Topic
EW2	Self-reported attitude changes
EW2	Living in a patriarchal society
UW4	Marriage
UW6, EW5, EW1	Marriage
UW5	Living in a patriarchal society
UW5	Marriage
EW2	Marriage
UW6	Living in a collectivistic society
UW1	Marriage
UW2	Employment situation
UW3	Lack of school education
EW1	Living in a patriarchal society
UW5	Family and education
EW6	Marriage
EW3	Living in a patriarchal society
UW5	Living in a collectivistic society

The results presented in the table above are of interest for two reasons:

1. The highest frequency of codes, by far, is to be found in a category relating directly to empowerment: self-reported attitude changes. In how far these changes are rooted in the education EW2 received, needs to be verified in the ensuing data analysis.
2. There are three categories that appear several times in the table: marriage, living in a patriarchal society and living in a collectivistic society. These topics are obviously determining factors for the women's lives and, most probably, their empowerment.

The Code-Relation-Browser

The Code-Relation-Browser displays the relation between the different categories. The categories oppose each other on two axes (x & y) and are depicted in dots; the higher a correlation, the bigger the dot. Significant results will be presented in descending order in the following table:

Table 5.3: Findings of the Code-Relation-Browser

X-Axe	Y-Axe	No. of codings
Pro arranged marriage	Living in a collectivistic society	28
Living in a patriarchal society	Inferiority of women	28
Personal assessment about the differences in received education	Self-reported attitude changes	22
Personal opinion on the importance of school education	Self-reported attitude changes	21
Differences between the educated and uneducated	Self-reported attitude changes	20
Living in a collectivistic society	Arranged marriage vs. love marriage	18
Living in a patriarchal society	Role models husband - wife	17
Living in a patriarchal society	Traditional/patriarchal role model of husband and wife	16
Gains/benefits from education	Self-reported attitude changes	16
Personal opinion on the importance of school education	Lack of school education	12
Permission by parents, husband or elders	Physical mobility	11
Different treatment/upbringing of boys and girls in India	Living in a patriarchal society	11
Different value of men and women in the Indian society	Living in a patriarchal society	11
Comparison of the mother's situation at the same age: better off	Family and education	11

Personal change through education	Self-reported attitude changes	11
Living in a collectivistic society	Inferiority of women	10
Personal assessment about the differences in received education	Personal opinion on the importance of school education	10
Respect through education	Self-reported attitude changes	10
Education and future of the women's children	Personal opinion on the importance of school education	10
Personal opinion on the importance of school education	Family and education	10
Influences in decision taking	Living in a collectivistic society	10

The main results of the Code-Relation-Browser show two things very clearly:

1. Living in a collectivistic society correlates with the support of arranged marriages.
2. Living in a patriarchal society is linked to the way the women view role models of husband and wife.

These findings suggest that the patriarchal and collectivistic structures in India are so entrenched in the women's self-conception that education does not break down traditional paradigms in these areas.

But there is more. As expected, self-reported attitude changes are related to educational factors. Strong links can be found with regard to:

- The women's personal assessment concerning the differences in received education (22)
- Their personal opinion on the importance of school education (21)
- Their opinion on the differences between the educated and uneducated (20)
- Gains/benefits from education (16)
- Respect through education (10)

Unsurprisingly, strong links can also be found between living in a collectivistic society and arranged marriages (18), the inferiority of women (10) and influences in decision making (10). Similarly, living in a patriarchal society correlates with

- The women's opinion on the distribution of roles between husband and wife (17), especially if their view is traditional/patriarchal (16)
- Different treatment/upbringing of boys and girls in India (11)
- Different value of men and women in the Indian society (11)

Again, these findings might indicate that education may not offer ways to dissolve deeply embedded social and patriarchal constructs concerning topics like marriage, the inferiority of women, (traditional) role models between husband and wife as well as the different treatment, upbringing and value of boys and girls in India. In order to gain clarity, the results need to be analysed in more detail in the further course of this study.

Concerning education, the Code-Relations-Browser offered some interesting insights as well. Here, it became clear that being aware about the importance of school education is related to:

- The lack of school education (12), the women's assessment about the differences in received education (10), the education and future of the women's children (10), as well as family and education (10)

These findings indicate that those women suffering from a lack of school education are not only aware of its importance but, more than that, want to educate their children.

There are two last findings of the Code-Relation-Browser:

1. Family and education (that is: the parents' and siblings' education and job situation as well as the parents' influence on the women's school education) might play a decisive role in achieving a better living standard.
2. Physical mobility is linked to the permission of parents, husband and/or elders, indicating that in this area as well, empowerment possibly remains low.

The results of open coding will now provide the basis for axial coding.

5.2.2 Findings of axial coding

After several rounds of open coding, the codes need to be systemized more broadly in the next step. On a small scale, systematization has already been achieved through dimensionality and will now have to be done across categories.

A brief overview on the most important findings across the codesystem and its categories can be found in the Code-Matrix-Browser and the Code-Relation-Browser. Their findings will now be analysed in more detail. For this process, the categories and subcategories developed during open coding are examined in how far they relate to (1) the *phenomenon* under study, (2) the *causal conditions* leading to the occurrence of the phenomenon, (3) the *context* of the investigated phenomenon, (4) intervening *conditions* that influence the phenomenon, (5) the actions and interactional *strategies* used to manage or handle the phenomenon and (6) the *consequences* of the actions and interactions related to the phenomenon (Kelle 2005:7-8).

Table 5.4: Axial arrangement of the core categories

Element	Description
Phenomenon	Education / Lack of education
Causal conditions	The causal condition leading to school enrolment and either a successful graduation or the school dropout.
Context	Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)
Intervening conditions	Incidences that promoted/hampered school attendance / further education
Action strategies	Response to education / the lack of education
Consequences	Effects of education / the lack of education on mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

In applying the previously described paradigm, the process of systemizing the data is highly simplified. Rather than looking for any and all kinds of relations within the data, causal relationships are emphasized and concepts brought into a basic frame of generic relationships (Borgatti 2005:para.5)

5.3.2.1 Evaluation EW1³¹

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW1 successfully completed 12th standard and is currently working as a nurse.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

In the interview, EW1 explains that it was her mother who decided to send her to school. When asked about her neighbours' and far relatives' opinion about her going to school, she states:

Nothing. Nobody said anything. Just the neighbours, those who were uneducated, they were telling: "Why does a girl child has to be studied?" But in my family, they were very positive, they wanted all of us to study.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

When looking at EW1's family situation, it quickly becomes evident why she was able to successfully complete her school education. Though her father did not go to school, her mother studied up to 10th class and was determined to educate her children even further. It is of no surprise that all of EW1's sisters also studied.

My mother studied only 10th class and she was not doing any work but was in the house. Whereas she gave good education for us and we are girls, we are educated and we are now doing jobs. So, we are well off now. We are respected and our position is a little higher in the society as well as in the family. However, it's my mother's sacrifice. She motivated us, because she was not educated. She wanted us girls to be educated. Though we have got a good position, it is because of my mother.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and the further education

Though EW1 had a strong support from her family, she mentions another positive influencing factor on her school education: the hostel.

³¹ All quotes and citations can be found in appendix C, semi structured interviews: transcripts (XXX-CXLIII)

There were some things that my parents did not tell me, but they did tell us in the hostel, like how we have to be in our discipline as a girl child. Girl children have to study well, stand on their own legs, cause then only we can come up. So, they also educated us, gave the value of education, so they nurtured us in such a way and all of our wardens took care of us. [...] And this is something that I am fortunate to have. Because of the hostel life, they took care and gave protection and guidance and only even now it helps us. Wherever we go, the discipline, the spirituality and the punctuality and the value that we gained there is, throughout my life, helping me.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

EW1's response to education is very positive. She is thankful for the knowledge, competences and discipline she gained. Her school life motivated her to continue her education even further and she successfully completed a Bachelor of Nursing. But more than that:

- She easily got into her first job and values her work

Interviewer: How did you look for this job? Was there any difficulty in getting the job?

EW1: No, no. I got 80% marks in my nursing and through merit I got the job immediately. There was no difficulty in looking for a job, because after my marriage, when I delivered my baby, I was at home for six months, and within two months I got this job and immediately I joined.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on the fact that it was not difficult for you to get a job?

EW1: Because of the quality of my education and also because I got a good mark as well as through merit, I got the job.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

EW1 feels empowered and independent through education. This becomes visible in several areas of her life:

- She feels respected in the society
- She is financially independent

Because of education, I am able to do a job now. I am able to stand on my own leg for my life. I don't depend on anybody. [...] Financially I am able to be independent and I am also helpful to others in the family.

- She has an equal standing with her husband. Conflicts are solved by talking.

Interviewer: When he takes a decision and you're not agreeing with it, what would be your response?

EW1: Usually we agree. We discuss and agree.

Interviewer: But not always. What if sometimes, you're unable to agree? Or there's some disputing thing or decision is making both of you not able to agree with each other? Then what will happen?

EW1: If I do, I get upset and angry and he also sometimes, but then finally we'll talk and decide. That's how.

- She takes care of income expenditure and decision making together with her husband
- She decided together with her husband about the number of children they would like to have
- She values her education and wants to pass that on to her children

I have come up in my life through education. I want to give a better education than me to my children and I am confident, because my education made me to shine up to this level. So, much more than me, I want to give education to my children. So, I'm sure, the education will make them come up in life.

- Though she experienced it differently herself, she values boys and girls in the same way and does not differentiate between them

I will treat both, boys and girls, equally. I will give them good education. Yes of course, there are families, who treat a girl differently from that of a boy, but I am not that type.

- She supports the use of contraceptives
- She moves around freely and is not restricted in her physical mobility

EW1: I'm a working woman. So, every day I go out morning and evening. For my duties, I go out. There are no restrictions even to go out.

Interviewer: Apart from your work, are you able to go?

EW1: Yes. There is no restriction. I go.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for
- She feels independent and confident

Those who are uneducated, for EVERYTHING, even to make a simple decision, they have to depend on their parents, elders or husbands. Whereas I am educated and I don't depend on everybody for every decision making in my life or in my family. So, I take a decision, I'm able to decide, and I am confident in taking. This is the difference.

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Interestingly, there is one area in EW1's life, where she accepts a decision she actually does not second: her marriage. When asked why she got married and who decided about her bridegroom, she says:

My parents decided for me, because there was no male child in our family. All of us are girls. So, when my parents came and told me that I had to get married, because he's my uncle, they said that when he comes to the family, he'll take care of the family like our own boy in the family, so you have to get married. Because there was no other way, I was thinking, if a relative comes, maybe he'll take care of the family, so I agreed to that. [...] Until marriage I did not see him.

Although EW1 did not want to marry her uncle, she subordinated. It seems reasonable to assess her missing protest as a lack of empowerment. However, her decision needs to be viewed in the context of living in a highly collectivistic society, where acceptance of parental influence over partner choice is the norm (Bejanyan, Marshall & Ferenczi 2015:1). The influence of collectivism on mindset, behaviour and decision taking concerning marriage will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

5.3.2.2 Evaluation EW2

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW2 successfully completed 12th standard and has a Master of Education.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

In the interview, EW2 mentions her father as the main driving factor behind her school enrolment and the continuation of her studies. Although the neighbours and high cast landowners opposed his decision to educate his daughters, her father was determined to send her, as well as her sisters, to school. EW2 quotes him as follows:

"Though she's a girl, she is my daughter, and I haven't studied and I want my daughter to study and stand on her own leg. I have no sons, but that doesn't mean that I should make my daughters not to go to school. I want them to go to study and I don't want them to struggle like me. They have to do their jobs and they have to take care of their lives. I don't want them to depend on others, without education. I am very particular. I want my daughters to go and study and come up in life and stand on their own leg without depending on others."

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

EW2's parents are both uneducated. Her mother is illiterate and takes care of the family's cows. Her father dropped out in 5th class and is going for labour work in the nearby town. Because he wanted his children to have a better life than he has, he sent his four daughters to school. All of them successfully completed their school education and are now studying at university.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and further education

Again, EW2's father plays a key role regarding her studies, during school time as well as in her decision for an academic career. One incident was of particular importance for her:

[W]hen I was in the hostel, during eighth class, my father came one day. And though he was such a big man with all his moustache, he came and cried to me [...] and said: "The fourth one is also a girl. [...] I am not blessed with a boy. I have only girls. There is nobody to take care of the family. [...] You only have to be responsible in taking care of the family, your siblings and me. [...] So now, I would insist that you study well, [...] and [...] in seeing you, the other three girls will also follow your good footstep [...]." So, this moment I realized how responsible I was and should be. [...] It was a great turning point and great experience for me. In my life, even now I stand, because of that particular change in me. [...] I am able to develop my family and my sisters are also guided by me.

Two things become obvious: the influence of living in a collectivistic as well as patriarchal society. Since EW2 has no brothers and is the eldest among her sisters, she is supposed to take over the responsibility for the whole family. Her acceptance of the parental influence and authority is high as she follows what her father expects from her without questioning his demands. More than that: it is a joy and privilege for EW2 to sacrifice her time and future for the family.

Her further studies are also influenced by her father's suggestions. Though he encourages her to study as far as she wants to ("With struggle also I will support you. You study how much ever you want"), he also tells her to enrol for a Post-Graduate Programme and become a teacher. When asked, whether that was her wish as well, she answered:

Both. My father has been telling me that and that has been in my mind that I should do PG and have to go for teaching. So, I started focussing on that. It was in my mind and I was working on it.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

EW2 regards her education as a privilege. To her, it is nothing self-evident and she values and cherishes it. But more than that, she considers education as a responsibility towards her family and the society she lives in. She thus responds to her education with thankfulness and diligence and wants to make the most of it for herself, her family and the people surrounding her. What she already achieved and plans to accomplish is remarkable:

- She continued her education and successfully completed a Master of Education
- She easily got into her first job and worked as a professor in several private colleges
- She is currently undertaking a professional training to apply at a state university

Till last year, I was working as a professor. Currently I am not working. I have quit the job as I wanted to upgrade myself with computer skills to apply to the government as a professor. I wanted to appear for a competitive exam in the government to apply for a government professor job. So, I quit my present job and started learning computer and other competitive exam practices in order to get into a government job.

- She managed to achieve a better living standard compared to her mother at the same age

I am better off and looked very high at and I have come up, because my mother is illiterate and not studied. She has not been to school and hasn't experienced much in her life. All that she was doing was taking care of her children and the work at home. She never exposed herself to anything else. [...] So that's where I am different. I have come up. All the reasons for why I am in a better off position in the society as well as when compared to that my mother, the one basic thing is education.

- She became a role model for others

Many started following me. They looked at me and started changing. [...] I am so happy. The change in me has contributed to bring change in many.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

In the interview, EW2 repeatedly stresses how much education changed her life and her personality. She feels empowered and independent. She knows her worth within her family, her marriage as well as in the society. This becomes visible in several areas of her life:

- She feels respected in the society

I am from a remote village, but I have been given SO much respect by the society and by big people also, mainly because of my good education and my discipline.

- She is financially independent

I am able to stand on my own leg, for my livelihood and for my earning.

- She is aware about how much education has changed her and knows her worth

I'm educated. I need not work in the same place, where I am not given the respect or regard for my work. There is no need for me to work in a place, where my dignity is questioned.

- She states that she grew in discipline, cleanliness, obedience and spirituality

- She has an equal standing with her husband. Conflicts are solved by talking.

Husband and wife means just this. Yes, that is part of our life: we fight. Most of the time I am the person who will say the things that will contribute to argument and conflict. But then, both of us get along with each other, making some final agreement. It doesn't last long. It's mainly just temporary.

- Her understanding of the division of role-models between husband and wife is liberal

Both have to be affectionate with each other. Both have to be respecting each other. If we expect them to be very respecting and affectionate towards us and we ourselves don't do, that won't be good. So, it should be both. There needs to be a balance.

- She is the one who takes care of income expenditure and decision making

He sees that what I do is better. So always he earns and brings and gives it to me and I only keep everything. If he wants, weekly or everyday or once in two days, whatever money he needs for his travel, he gets from me.

- She and her husband decided together about the number of children they want to have

- She supports the use of contraceptives

- Before getting pregnant again, she wants to have a permanent job contract

We both have decided that till I get a permanent job, because I'm in the process of getting a permanent job, I shouldn't have a pregnancy. Till I'm settled, we are postponing the pregnancy. So, my husband uses contraceptives, we both decided on that.

- There are no restrictions concerning her physical mobility

I know I'm educated. I can go and come back. So, there is no such question in my life. Never in my life was there a situation, where I was wanting security or someone to support. Never like that.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for

When looking at EW2's life, the changes through education are striking. Yet, there are two areas in her life, where she completely subordinated to her parents' decision: her schooling career and her marriage. In both cases, the reasons for her actions must be sought in her pronounced collectivistic thinking. When explaining and justifying her decision to marry her paternal cousin, it becomes apparent how much collectivism has shaped her attitudes to life:

I never really dreamed of anybody in my life or how my husband should be like, because my name was picked for my auntie's son. Although there were a lot of opportunities for me to get a better boy. I mean working wise: police, officers. But I never thought about all these things, because my father said: "You should marry my sister's son, because [o]ther men, they will take care of you well, but they won't take care of our family [...]." So, I started thinking that what my daddy said is better [...]. So, now because he's my relative, he takes the whole responsibility of the family also. That's why I never had a dream about who my husband should be. [M]y dream was all focussed only with the family. [...] So, I decided [...] something that would really benefit my family and myself.

Her answer makes clear that her decision was well thought off. She deliberately decided to subordinate her individual goal to the well-being of the family. Interestingly, it is a sacrifice she ultimately feels happy about. Thus, her education has apparently not changed her attitude towards the predominant handling of social and personal matters.

5.3.2.3 Evaluation EW3

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW3 successfully completed 12th standard and is working as a Certified Professional Coder.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

Unlike most of the other interviewees, EW3 constitutes her school enrolment with her own desire for education. When asked who encouraged her in her studies, she states:

I myself. It was me who went to school along with other children. I was the one who was, right from the beginning, wanting to go to school. I remember that I never stopped, even a day. I went to school regularly and I liked it. Later my mother, who was a primary school teacher that time, also encouraged me and along with her I used to attend to school.

When looking a bit closer though, it becomes apparent that it was her mother all along who motivated and influenced her.

My mother [...] had a very difficult background of studying, especially when she studied 10th and plus one, plus two. With much difficulty, she studied. Therefore, she wanted me to study well, so she inspired me and motivated me in my studies.

Among other things, her mother's support is reflected in the fact that EW3 did not have to help in the household, when returning from school. Instead, she was given time to play and do her homework.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

EW3 has an academic family background. Though her father studied only up to 10th class, her mother obtained a Master in Sociology, working in the counselling department of a government hospital as a social worker in a HIV project. EW3's sister graduated in nursing. The family is thus relatively well-off and attached great importance to educate both daughters.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and further education

Besides the motivation of her mother, EW3 was also encouraged by the wardens and teachers in the hostel:

When I came to the hostel, the hostel wardens, they motivated me in my studies. And I also was doing my studies well. I was getting a good rank, the first rank. And seeing my performance, getting a good rank, aunties started encouraging me. And as I was studying, I got a shield also for my performance. That further motivated me to go in the studies. All teachers, correspondence, everybody motivated me in my studies.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

EW3 responds to her education with enthusiasm and diligence:

- She achieved a degree in medical coding and is working full time
- She managed to get into her first job easily and is financially independent

I have not experienced a difficulty, because after my course I was at home and I started applying and even my friends told me to apply to this particular company. [S]o I went and handed in the application, I was called for the interview, I got selected. I never experienced any difficulties [...].

- She wants to educate herself further and plans to apply for a PhD.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

Education has not only helped EW3 in becoming financially independent, but it also affected her behaviour and self-perception.

- She is aware of her education, has her own opinion and avouches for it

I'm very focused on quality and I am educated. So, when I tell certain things, others may not like it [...]. But I cannot go according to their ways. [...] Especially in my work, when compared to the ones who are below me. When I am deciding or when I am doing something, they may not like it [...]. So, these differences sometimes I come across in my life, especially [...] in the work environment or in the family or in the other friends' circle, these I am able to see often.

- She achieved a better living standard compared to her mother at the same age

In my age, my mother did not complete her studies and she got married already. [...] In that age, I am now taking care of only myself. [...] So, what all I do, it's only for me [...], whereas she [...] had to study as well as she had to take care of the household responsibilities. Whereas I am not like that. I feel I am better off when compared to my mother.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for
- She states that she improved in discipline, honesty and time management

Despite having a strong opinion and speaking up for it, there are many aspects of her life remaining unaffected by her education:

- She faces harsh restrictions concerning her physical mobility and does not rebel or express any form of disapproval:

[T]here are restrictions. I will not be allowed even to go to my friend's house. So, with MUCH difficulty I have to convince my parents that I want to go to my friend's house. I then have to tell in detail why I want to go, what's the reason. So, only then will I be allowed.

- Her incomes and expenditures are managed by her mother
- She plans to let her parents pick a husband for her. She justifies her decision as follows:

Even if I like also, but my parents only have to decide. It's the family members, who have to say yes. If they cannot say yes, then there is no point. So therefore, before we decide, we should think whether the family will accept it or not.

Another main influencing factor is her unwillingness to take over the responsibility for her marriage and, de facto, her life:

[If] the parents have arranged everything, then the parents' support will be there, when we have conflict. If the parents have not given their support, then the conflict will continue. [...] Ultimately, you have to get into the family life only. There is no way of escaping (laughing). [...] Therefore, I have no personal opinion, because that's ultimate.

Her statement very clearly shows her awareness of the collectivistic society she lives in. She knows that she has “to get into the family life only” and that “there is no way of escaping”, even if she wanted to. But instead of revolting against this oppressive system, she indulges to her parents’ wishes and claims to “have no personal opinion, because that’s ultimate.”

- Her understanding of role-models between husband and wife remains shaped by traditional and patriarchal ideas. Though she speaks her mind openly at work and stands up for her opinion, she plans to let her husband decide about how many children they are going to have.
- She does not doubt the authority or decisions of her parents

We should give value for our parents also. Why are the parents restricting [us]? It's for our good only. It's for our safety only. So according to the parents’ desire, if we follow, then it is fine.

In contrast to EW2, EW3’s behaviour and mindset are only partly changed by education. Nevertheless, the effects that school education have on her life are undeniable.

5.3.2.4 Evaluation EW4

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW4 successfully completed 12th standard and has a B.Sc. in Nursing.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

Regarding her school education, EW4 states that both her parents influenced and motivated her. However, it was her father who decided about her further career path. Though EW4 wanted to sign up for a graduate programme, her father enrolled her in a nursing course.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

EW4 comes from a rather poor family background, with her mother being illiterate and her father dropping out of school in eighth class. Both are now working as coolies³². According to EW4, the illiterateness of her mother was the main reason why she and her brother were sent to school. She explains:

My father studied up to eighth standard and my mother is illiterate. That's why she made me study.

Like EW3, EW4's parents gave her the time to study and do her homework after school.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and further education

Already early in her life, EW4 realizes the importance of her own school education. Being aware of the changes it brings, it encouraged and motivated her to continue studying.

³² The term coolie means labourer and is a commonly-used and inoffensive word in South Asia. However, there are regions where the expression is regarded as derogatory or a racial slur (Gaurav & Singhal 2015:1)

Because of education, I have now come to this level in my life. Now I am working, I'm a nurse. [...] What I am up till now, is because of my education. It is what has brought me up to this level.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

EW4 knows how important and powerful knowledge is. She makes use of her education in many areas of her life:

- She successfully finished a Bachelor of Nursing
- She did not face any problems when applying for and entering into her job

Immediately after finishing my course, I applied in two places and attended the interview in both. The second one was CMC [Christian Medical College]. I liked it and I got it. There was no problem in getting the job.

- She moves around freely and is not restricted in her physical mobility

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

EW4 states that she gained respect and grew in confidence. This becomes apparent in the fact that

- She feels respected in the society and at her work place

People definitely approach me differently than uneducated girls, because people think that I am qualified. I'm educated. So, they give me respect and approach me differently by giving respect. Whereas with uneducated, they don't do like that.

- Her standing within the family changed

At the time of teenage time, my parents were very much conscious and very much afraid whether I would get into wrong ways and wrong friendships and whether I will spoil my life. [...] Now, they're not afraid, because they know that education has brought such a change in me. I am disciplined, I am a working person. So, they know, they trust me, and even now, if I talk with any boy, they're not afraid, because they know that I can decide.

- She feels more capable of taking decisions

[T]here is a difference between me and my equally age of uneducated girls. [W]e think and decide and do, whereas the uneducated ones will do things as they like. They won't think or decide as planned. They will do whatever comes on their way. They will just keep doing and going in life. But with education, you have general knowledge as well as the academic experience and expertise. Therefore, you will think.

- She states that she grew in discipline, obedience and spirituality

- She has the courage to speak up

Interviewer: Has your boss at any time shown partiality or was she indifferent or did she do injustice to you in the work?

EW4: So far, I have never experienced like that. If I experience, then definitely I will go and talk to her, so that I will know why she behaved like that with me. If I know the reason, then I will know what to do. So, I will go and talk to her.

- She accomplished financial independence
- She managed to achieve a better living standard than her mother at the same age

It is me who has a good and a higher regard and respect in the society than my mother, because my mother was uneducated. When she started her life, there were many in her family, children and brothers, and therefore she had to do lots of work. She was only in the midst of the work. Whereas I am not like that, because I have been given the opportunity to study. In my age, my mother was with too many responsibilities of work, whereas I study and got the opportunity for working and am now earning.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for

However, all of these changes have no effect when it comes to decisions concerning her family life:

- She does not question the authority or decision-making ability of her parents

[Parents] know everything. They know about children, they know what is good for children, what is not good for children and they plan for their family. Therefore, what all they decide, it is good. As a daughter, my opinion about children is, that children means, we have to listen. And parents means: they are the ones, who have to decide for their children.

- She subordinates to her parents wish with regard to her future husband

It is my parents' wish. Whenever they want me to get married, I will say yes.

Just as EW3, EW4 justifies her decision with her unwillingness to assume responsibility for her life:

[P]arents are the ones who can decide better for us. If I select, then tomorrow, if any problem comes in between, then my parents won't support me. So, if they arrange, then they will take responsibility. If any problem we face, then they will come and solve the problem and they will be with me. If not, they'll say that you only got married, you only selected, so you have to take care and be responsible.

- She lets her mother take care of her income and expenditures

5.3.2.5 Evaluation EW5

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW5 successfully completed 12th standard, has a B.Sc. in Physiotherapy and, after finishing her current internship, wants to enrol for a Master of Physiotherapy.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

In the interview, EW5 mentions her mother as the main motivator for her schooling career. It becomes clear though, that both her parents are interested in her education.

She states:

In my family, both boys and girls are made to study. As long as they study well, they are made to study equally.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

EW5 comes from a rather poor background. Her mother was able to study up to 10th standard and is working as a housekeeper and cook in a day care centre for children. Her father attended school until 5th standard and is currently unemployed.

Though both parents were not able to attend university or even finish school, they were keen in educating their children: just as EW5, her two brothers also successfully finished their studies. Her older brother has a Master in Engineering and her younger brother a diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and the further education

Besides the motivation of her family, EW5 mentions the hostel as a main influencing factor for her education. She explains that

[u]p to fifth standard I studied in my village. Then after fifth, I started coming to the XY Hostel. Only after coming to the hostel, my whole life changed in me. LOTS of difference, lots of change happened in me. [...] During those days, we were nurtured very much. There was lots of opportunity, but now we are out of hostel and I realize the opportunities to learn and to get nurtured is reduced. Whenever I have doubts, I used to

go and get the doubts in studies cleared with the aunties and I learned a lot about English grammar from Geeta³³ aunty. So, this was very helpful for me.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

Due to her studies, EW5 knows “how to come up in life and how to set goals to come up in life”. When looking at her biography, the objective of advancing in life, becomes most apparent in two areas of her life:

- She successfully completed a Bachelor in Physiotherapy and plans to enrol for a corresponding Master
- Although she is not yet earning her own money, she already managed to achieve a better living standard than her mother at the same age:

Those days, there was no development. Therefore, my parents were not that developed. Whatever they knew only they passed on to us. But now, whatever we have learned, we have come up in life. Therefore, when compared to my mother, I am only in a high position and people look at me in a high way.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

EW5 is deeply convinced that education taught her more discipline, a better behaviour and how to set goals for her life. When looking closer, there are many more changes though:

- She gained respected in the society
- She moves around freely and is not restricted in her physical mobility.
- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for
- She has a liberal understanding of the role-models between husband and wife

A wife should have freedom. He [the husband] should also have freedom (...) 'This one is low and this one is low' - that attitude should not be there. Both should be equal.

- She has an equal standing with her husband. Conflicts are solved by talking.

[S]o far, we have never argued. Both of us will discuss to the extent that we will convince each other and we will not go into argument.

³³ To preserve anonymity, the name has been changed. The real name is known to the author of this study.

- She decided together with her husband about the number of children they would like to have
- She uses contraceptives
- She does not differentiate between boys and girls

In those days, when my parents were there, for them, there was a difference. But now I have got educated, I value both, I will do good education, equal education.

Despite her liberal opinion on married life, she supports arranged marriages and let her parents pick a husband for her. Unsurprisingly, her justification is grounded in collectivistic thought patterns:

Arranged marriage is good. [...] If parents are selecting, they are good enough to select who the person is. Only then our life will be very good.

Interestingly, there is another area in her marriage, where her liberal thinking concerning the equality between men and women does not hold true: she lets her husband take care of all income and expenditures. Although she would do it differently, she does not speak up:

If I have the money, I will definitely write down what all expenses I do. So, I used to think like that. When they spend it, I used to think, if I do it, I will write down and keep what all the expenses and what expense I should do. When he decides about expenditures, then I would think, I shouldn't allow all unnecessary expenditures. I will look for what all unnecessary expenditures and then I would think and tell that these are unnecessary expenditures, it should not be done.

5.3.2.6 Evaluation EW6

1. Phenomenon: Education

EW6 successfully completed 12th standard, has a Master of Education and worked as a teacher. Due to her recent marriage, she quit her job but wants to continue working soon.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school enrolment and its successful completion.

In the interview EW6 states that both her parents encouraged her in her studies. Unlike the women in the previous interviews, she also mentions going to the Balwadi, an

Indian pre-school run for economically weaker sections of the society, either by the government or NGOs:

When I was two years old, my daddy used to take me to the Balwadi in the village. In the Balwadi, there is a small children's nursery, so when I was two years, my daddy used to take me to the Balwadi and make me attend and return. So that was the starting.

Her further studies were also unconditionally supported by her parents:

My father said: "Up to which level you want to study, you study. I have no problem. Even if there is no money and I struggle, I will make an attempt to make you study whatever your aim is."

EW6 explains that support mainly with the biography of her mother who, before being allowed to study and work, had to marry. EW6 states:

[W]hat all my mother was deprived of in her young age, my parents decided to give me the best education. Therefore, I got the opportunity to study, get into a job and then go for the wedding.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

EW6 has an academic family background. Her mother being a teacher, and her father working as a warden in Madras diocese, education was fostered early in EW6's life.

While going to school, EW6 did not have to help much in the household. Instead, she was given sufficient time to play, study and do her homework after returning home from school. Interestingly, the domestic chores her parents gave her were not allocated according to the sex. On the contrary, her brothers had to help in the same way:

In my family, there was no such difference, because even the kitchen work we all, boys and girls, do together. And sometimes, when I'm given kitchen work and I fall sick and I am unable to do, my brothers also do the same. [...] Because my father is studied, he treated all three of us the same. Irrespective of boy or a girl. He treated everyone the same in the family.

As can be seen in the further analysis, her upbringing as a child influenced her mindset and attitude towards life only partly and not as deeply as one should expect.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and the further education

Besides having a strong support in her family, EW6 mentions the hostel as another main influencing factor regarding her motivation to study.

In the hostel, I was struggling in the beginning. It was hard to get up so early and study and to be away from my family. Then, after a year, when I came home for vacation, everybody looked at me in a different way, because I was studying in the hostel. That motivated me to study. Also, in the hostel they encouraged me in my studies.

5. Action strategies: Response to education

Being aware of her mother's biography and her struggle to study and work, EW6 not only appreciates her education but also makes use of it:

- She completed a Bachelor of Education and worked as a teacher
- She managed to get into her first job easily

Soon after I completed my Bachelor, I applied for the job and the first job itself, I got it. One of the positive things in my life was XY Hostel. It contributed a LOT for me in appearing for the interview and successfully getting through it.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

Looking at EW6' life and her behaviour, the influence of education on her self-perception and mindset are undeniable:

- She attained independence
- She has the courage to speak up for herself

I am capable of managing any problem in my life without depending on others.

If I was treated indifferently or unjustly in my work spot, I will definitely ask for it and inquire why I have been treated like that. Because if I have been doing good, then there shouldn't be injustice and if there is some injustice and I'm treated indifferently, that has to be expressed to the higher authorities and it has to be found out by them, why I have been treated like that. When indifference happens, I will ask.

- She feels respected in the society

The educated are definitely looked up, because they know many things and they are able to decide and they also work.

- She considers her education and work more important than getting married

My mother got married when she was 27 and though she wanted to study and work, she could not do, because she got married. After marriage only she went for teacher training and then to her job. Whereas now, I completed my education, I got a job and after having a job I got married. So, I got that privilege of going to job and then get married.

- She is financially independent

I am educated and working. Others see me and the difference that I'm going for work and earning. Those in my age group who have not studied got married and they have children and they are not working. They depend on others.

- She managed to achieve a better living standard than her mother at the same age

- In her marriage, conflicts are solved by talking

We both discuss and then decide. I share what I feel and he also shares and finally we decide. So, we talk, and express, and discuss and then take decisions.

- She plans to treat her children equally

It's all children, so I will take care of them equally.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for

Despite her academic family background and her liberal attitude concerning female employment, education did not break up collectivistic and patriarchal thought structures in many other areas of her life. Her outlook on marriage and the division of roles and responsibilities remains deeply traditional:

- She does not question the authority of her parents or elders

- She supports arranged marriages and let her family pick a husband for her

In my opinion, it is the parents who have to look for the boy for the marriage. [...] Only the elders in the family take decision about selecting a boy [...]. But however, in my family they also discussed with me and said: "Only if you say yes, we will arrange a boy for you. You have to decide about your life." So, they gave me a chance to decide. So usually the eldest decide about the marriage and the boy.

- She does not know anything about contraceptives

- Income and expenditure are managed and controlled by her husband and mother-in-law. She does not question any of their decisions.

Since they're elders in the family, I will definitely not express or talk. Because they're elders, I won't question them. I would never think: "Why are they doing like this, they could have done it in the way that I expect." Since they're experienced and older people, I'm not supposed to ask.

- She is deeply convinced that a woman has to subordinate to her husband and his family. Although she says that there shouldn't be authority between husband and wife, she also believes that:

[a] wife should be according to the husband's and in-law's expectation. Even if the expectation is not fulfilled, she should find out and change accordingly.

When asked how a husband should be, if the wife has to change according to the in-law's expectations, her answer is clearly shaped by patriarchal ideas:

EW 6: He should be good.

Interviewer: You said that a wife should adjust and change according to the expectations of the in-laws. But are there any such things for the husband?

EW 6: No, not such specific thing for the husband. Nothing except that he has to take care of the wife well.

- She is constrained in her physical mobility

Generally, elders in the family decide about me going out and who accompanies me.

When looking at EW6, her life and her mindset, the limitations of education in a society like India become obvious: although her parents lived different values and taught her otherwise, EW6's thinking remains steeped in the prevailing attitude of collectivism and patriarchy and is changed only partly.

5.3.2.7 Evaluation UW1

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW1 dropped out in first standard and did not graduate from school. She has no secure or permanent job.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

UW1's early school dropout during first standard was not imposed on her by anybody. Instead, it was a deliberate decision she took by herself; not out of unwillingness to study but because of her family situation. She states:

I myself stopped, because both my parents were not in good terms. My father was not taking care of the family and my mother was struggling. So, I did not go to school. I stopped. My father used to go for labour work but he never used to support the family and my mother. My mother only was taking care of the family responsibilities. So, seeing the situation and my mother struggling, I was taking care of the family, when my mother went for work. That's why I was not having the interest to go to school.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

UW1 comes from an economically poor family. Both parents are illiterate labour workers and could not ensure the education of their three children. Since her father had a massive drinking problem and did not take care of the family, UW1 started to feel responsible for her mother at a very young age:

I wanted to go to school, but because of my family situation, because my father was not treating my mother properly, not giving money, my mother was struggling to manage, so I opted to stay back and help my mother.

Her younger and older brother dropped out of school during second and third standard for the same reason and started going for labour work instead. UW1 recounts:

My father was not taking control of the family, so they themselves stopped and didn't want to go to school anymore. It's all, we ourselves decided, because our father was not taking control of the family. We ourselves decided and stayed back without going to school.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that hampered school attendance and the further education

The older UW1 gets, the more she understands the struggle of her mother and the inevitability of her own sacrifice. Although she still desires to study and envies those children who are able to attend school, her attitude towards the whole situation becomes more and more realistic and serene:

I used to long for that. We should have gone for studying. But then how I satisfied myself: we cannot go because of our family situation. If everyday our mother goes for work, she will earn 100-150 Rupees. With that only she can support the family. Why not help our mother also? So, I satisfied myself that I am helping my struggling mother. So that's how I was thinking and I did not go to school.

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack education

In the course of the interview, UW1's personal struggle becomes more and more apparent. Since her husband died in a work accident three years ago, UW1 takes care of her daughters alone. Having sacrificed her own future for the sake of the family's survival as a child, she now suffers from her lacking school education massively. The only way to earn money is through labour work, where the pay is hardly sufficient enough to obtain the basic necessities for her family. The situation clearly overstrains

her, as she still struggles with her fate and is unable to find adequate coping mechanisms:

I feel that if I had gone for studies, these things I wouldn't have experienced: my mother struggling, even me struggling sometimes, taking challenges, responsibility over work, taking up work at this small age. [...] Now my situation is like this, because no certainty for my labour work. I have to take care of my own family without my husband. So, this is something I feel overburdening me every time. [...]. My childhood, how I struggled. Even now I struggle, without any guarantee for my job. So, no education brought me to this.

Appallingly, when looking back at her mother's life, she deems her situation better than her own:

My mother was in a better position. No education for both of us, but then at least [...] we were all helping. [...] Now I am left alone, nobody to help. [...] I feel, my children should be educated, so I am trying to send them. I am struggling. I appreciate my mother, because in spite of my father beating her, scolding her, fighting without giving money, she was trying to uplift the family with her struggle. So, she is better when compared to me. [...] I am a nobody and left on my own. Now I have to struggle in my life throughout.

Being a lone parent in a collectivistic society, she feels not only left alone, but unable to lead her life the way she would like to. She attributes this to her lacking school education that makes it difficult for her

- To educate all her children

I made all three children go to school. The first one was studying ninth class and she has to go by bus. The other two are studying in the local village. So, the first one I stopped, because every day I have to give her 20 Rupees bus fare. It's not possible for me, because every day I have to give her money. And what I earn; one day I will get a labour, the other day if I don't get, then it's a struggle, so I stopped her. Well, in a day, when there is labour work, we have three meals. If there is no labour work, only two meals. We manage in such a way.

- To find regular work

It is not easy, because of the rain, the monsoon, we don't get regular labour. But whenever there is chance, I go for all the work.

- To find work, where she is not taken advantage of

Interviewer: If you go for labour work, do the landowners or higher men scold you or treat you badly or do some injustice to you?

UW1: That also happens, but what to do? I need job, so I just need to keep quiet and complete my work and come, because I need money to support my family and bring up my children. [...] So, if I think all those things, then I will not get up. So, I will not bother about whatever they say, I will complete my work and come.

6. Consequences: Effects of lacking education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

Having been deprived of the possibility to go to school as a child, UW1 feels helpless, weak and without perspective in her adult life. She quarrels with her own destiny and has to force herself to get up every morning. Her lacking empowerment becomes visible early in her life: at the age of 14, her parents arrange her marriage. Being brought up in a collectivistic society without education, she does not rebel or question their decision. Instead, her attitude towards arranged marriage remains positive. When asked who should look for the bridegroom, she says:

Only parents. When they look for a bridegroom for us, they will know the best for us and also, they will support us, when we are in trouble. That is a great support. So, parents only have to look for the bridegroom.

Unsurprisingly, her attitude towards the division of role models within a marriage is very traditional. Although she believes that a husband should be “very loving and friendly”, she is also of the opinion that a wife should be “understanding and caring for her husband”:

Especially when he returns from his hard work, we should attend to him and do the needful work. They may be having tension, but we should be calm and attentive.

This becomes visible in two other areas of her marriage as well:

- After giving birth to three girls, it is her husband who decides that she should undergo tubectomy. Again, she does not rebel.

[...] then third also happened to be a girl. So we decided, let us have a family planning surgery. Girls are more than enough. We can go with three. So, my husband only decided. He told me to undergo the family planning surgery. Three girls are enough.

- Contraceptives are not known to her

And yet, there are also areas in her life, where UW1 shows remarkable self-determination and that many of her opinions are, despite her lacking school education, rather liberal:

- She does not differentiate between boys and girls

I will treat equally. I give birth to both. So why should I differentiate? I won't differentiate between boys and girls. Both are my children and I want them to come up in life.

- She moves around freely and is not restricted in her physical mobility

There is nobody to control me. Whenever I want, in case I have to tell my mother-in-law, I will tell, because she will also take care of my family. So, I will go. [...] I need not ask permission or such. I can go. Because she is an elder person in the family, I used to tell her about it.

- She supports voting and decides independently which party she votes for
- She takes care of her income and the expenditures alone

I am taking care of my own family's income and expenditure. I myself take care of everything. I don't get anybody's help.

UW1 feels the impact of her lacking school education in her later life strongly. She is unable to cope with the early death of her husband and the responsibilities as a single mother. She has difficulties to find a job with decent wage and thus not only struggles to educate her three daughters, but also to provide sufficient food for them every day. Although she is able to manage her situation, she bemoans her fate and is convinced that her life would have been better with education.

5.3.2.8 Evaluation UW2

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW2 dropped out after completing fifth standard and did not graduate from school. She has no permanent job.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

Due to the economic situation in her family, EW2's father decided to take her out of school after completing fifth standard. Although she was supposed to work and support the family only temporarily, she did not enrol in school again.

Up to 10th I wanted to study. By 5th class my parents stopped me. From then onwards I started going for labour work.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

UW2 has a poor family background. Both parents are illiterate agricultural labour workers and did not earn enough to send all five daughters to school. Accordingly, none

of her sisters has a school-leaving certificate. Instead, three of UW2's sisters dropped out early; the youngest one did not attend school at all. To support the family, all five daughters had to go for labour work and help in the domestic chores.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that promoted school attendance and the further education

Since UW2 was taken out of school at a very young age, she did not rebel against her father's decision. However, there was also no one in or outside her family taking her side. Instead, her father's decision to stop her from school was backed by family and neighbours:

There are five daughters in my family, so neighbours and family members said: "Oh, five daughters! At least if you go to work and not to school, you can earn and support the family, because the parents are struggling to bring up all five daughters. Going to work or labour work will bring in some money to support the family."

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack of education

UW2 feels the impact of her lacking school education daily, especially since her husband committed suicide seven years ago. As is the way in a traditionally patriarchal society, she did not learn to fend for herself and thus relied on her husband's support entirely. Ever since his suicide, she struggles to take care of her four daughters alone. Having neither school diploma nor vocational training, she is bound to go for any labour work available:

I am going for labour work. And with whatever I earn, I am running the family. When I don't have any labour work, I might go for borrowing money and use it and then again, I will work and repay the money. [...] I like to go out. But whether I like it or not, I have to do, because I need the work. So, whether it is inside or outside, it's a work I have to do, because I want money.

UW2 responds to her lack of school education with perseverance and patience. She knows that she is unable to make large jumps financially and has to take each day as it comes. This is all the more admirable, since

- She has no guarantee for a secure job with reasonable payment

It's not every day guaranteed. Whenever there is a time during season I get work. When there is no work, then I struggle.

- She is illtreated at work, because of her caste

[...] that happened. But then, what to do? I have to think of my children. I need work, I need money. See, thinking of my children, I just cannot do anything about it, when they talk about me or when they differentiate. I have to just keep quiet, do the work and come. Because of my children.

- Her parents refuse to support her in any way

I cannot demand anything from my parents. Even when I face some problem or difficulty in my family, I cannot go to my parents for support, because they will say: "You have decided about your life partner, so you have to manage. Don't ask for help. Don't ask for our support." We are left like that.

6. Consequences: Effects of the lack of education on mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

UW2 accepts her fate without any self-pity. She is well aware of the fact that education would have made a difference in her life ("I could have worked a better job than labour work. That's what I am thinking") but tries to make the most out of it. Despite her lack of school education, she leads a rather self-determined life:

- She did not let her parents pick a husband for her, but chose him herself
- She had an equal standing with her husband and never experienced domestic violence

Never he hit me, never abused me or used abusive words. But he used to fight with me or quarrel with me, but for a short while. And that too mainly when I shout at our children to discipline. That time he would shout at me: "Don't treat children like that!" That was for a short while. After that he used to be calm with me and normal. He never hit me in my life.

- She takes care of her income and the expenditures

I am taking care in my family. My mother-in-law is living in the other street and she takes care of her family. She doesn't take care of mine. I only take care of my family.

- There are no restrictions in her physical mobility
- She wants to empower her daughters with education

I want to give a good education to daughters, so that they can get a job or earn their own living, so that they get a good respect in their family, wherever they go. So, I don't want the same name what I am getting, without education, I don't want that to happen with my daughters.

- Her preference for sons changed over time. She now values girls as well

Earlier, at the time of marriage, I was thinking to have two boys and one girl. That time I was not really knowing the life. But after I started my life, I witnessed my mother-in-law, who has got a son also, but her son is not at all taking care of them. So, I realized, it is better to have girls than boys. So now I changed. I like girls only. I have four girls and I'm happy. [...] I have no worry about not having boys.

- She supports the use of contraceptives, although she did not use them

Nevertheless, there are several aspects in her attitude to life and behaviour that show her lacking school education:

- She let her husband decide over the number of children she should get
- Though her marriage was not arranged, her attitude towards it remains positive.

When asked for the reason, she explains:

Because in my life I selected and now they are telling: "It is you, who selected, so you have to be on your own." So, parents' support will not be there. So, I feel we should go with a groom selected by parents.

Her lack of education becomes most obvious though, when asked about her opinion on voting. Her attitude and behaviour are clearly marked by her poverty and powerlessness. She states:

It's good. If I don't cast my vote, they won't give me family card, they won't give me ration, they won't give me rice. They won't involve me in any kind of welfare programme. Only if I cast my vote, I will be given all these privileges. Therefore, I have to vote. [...] Whichever party gives me money, I will vote.

UW2's life is characterized by her lack of education; not only financially but also regarding her attitudes and mindset. Though she perseveres and continues to fight against setbacks, her self-perception and self-worth reveal a broken woman who knows that she is not respected - neither in her family nor in society.

[N]ow I know, because there's no education, they treat me very badly and they nickname me and they talk bad about me, that I don't have anything. I did not bring anything, I'm not worth.

5.3.2.9 Evaluation UW3

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW3 dropped out during fifth standard and did not graduate from school. She has no permanent job.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

UW3 was enrolled for school by her parents and discontinued her studies during fifth standard. Though she herself decided to drop out of school, her mother and father did not keep her daughter from doing so. Instead, they were relieved about the help she started being at home.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

Like UW1 and UW2, UW3 comes from a poor family. Her parents are illiterate daily labour workers and could not afford to send all of their children to school until graduation. Her sister got married after completing 10th standard and her brother discontinued his studies during eighth class to support the family through labour work after the death of the mother.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that hampered school attendance and the further education

Though UW3's relatives and neighbours were opposing her decision to drop out of school so early, she sees no alternative but to support her family.

They all said: "Why are you discontinuing your studies? You continue education, go to school." But there was nobody to cook food and nobody to take care of the house, so I won't go to the school.

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack of education

UW3 reacts to her lack of school education with indifference mostly. When asked how she felt about other children going to school, her answers indicate that she probably never fully understood the importance of education, as there is neither envy nor regret. UW3 seems to have accepted her fate. She does not question her present situation and is not appalled by the injustice she experienced as a child. Although her life could have been different had she continued her education, she does not seem fully aware of that fact and thus does not quarrel with her past or present situation. More than that, she admits that she does not work very hard.

Without any self-pity, she states that her mother was in a better position when she was her age:

My mother was very good. She was hard working. I'm not that hard working. I don't go like that. So, I'm not in a better position.

6. Consequences: Effects of education on the mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

UW3's mindset and behaviour are clearly characterized by her lacking school education:

- Her understanding of marriage and the role-models between husband and wife is traditional and patriarchal

It really bothers me if I cannot agree to the decision he takes. I'm affected and I become upset about that. It worries me. [...] Somehow, we have to agree to the situation and manage. What to do? They're all big people. My husband is superior to me, so I can't do anything.

- Although she experienced DV in her marriage, she did not speak up

[T]hose days, when he was drinking alcohol, he used to beat me and fight with me, but not now.

- Her mother- and father-in-law are taking care of her income and expenditure
- Her mother-in-law decided on the number of children she should get as well as on her tubectomy. Again, she did not rebel.

I had two and my mother-in-law said: "Enough!", and I underwent surgery.

- She does not know about contraceptives
- She lost a child during labour work because of her indifference concerning pregnancies
- She is open to bribery regarding voting

Only if we put vote, then they give us money. So, I get money and we put the vote. [...] If they give money, I will take it and whomever I think, I will vote for them in the last.

And yet, there are also areas in UW3's life, where her attitudes and behaviour are more liberal and self-determined:

- She chose her husband, not her parents

- She wants to educate her children equally and give them a better future

I will make BOTH of them to study and I will treat them equally. Because I didn't study, at least I will make my daughter study well.

- She has the freedom to move around

If I want, I will just tell them and go. Nobody will say anything.

- She has the courage to defend herself against sexual harassment

UW3 is a striking example of a Dalit woman who does not rebel against her destiny but bears it with indifference and subordination. She did not learn to question the injustice and violence that has happened to her, least of all criticise it. UW3 is characterized by the collectivistic and patriarchal thought patterns around her.

5.3.2.10 Evaluation UW4

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW4 dropped out during second standard and did not graduate from school. She has no permanent job.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

UW4 had to drop out of school due to economic reasons. Having seven children and low wages, her parents decided to take her out of school during second standard. Her new task was to support the family through labour work, domestic chores and caring for her blind mother. UW4 left school so early that she does not even remember her attendance.

I have not been to school. Well, I was sent to school, but I don't remember going to school. My parents used to say that I went to first and second standard, but I don't remember about going to school.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

UW4 comes from a poor and large family: she is the eldest among seven children and had to take care of her blind mother until her marriage. Because her father is an illiterate

labour worker, she was supposed to support him as well as her mother to keep the family running:

Only my father was going for labour work, my mother never went, because she's blind. Because of that only I stopped from school. I took care of the household work and also helped my father in his daily labour. We took my mother to many hospitals, but she was born blind. [...] So, this is one of the reasons, why I as the oldest daughter in the family had to stay back and take care.

Out of her six siblings, three were sent to school and are continuing their education even today. Interestingly, it was not her parent's idea to educate her siblings, but the influence of her uncle who joined the family after the death of his wife.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that hampered school attendance and the further education

In contrast to her youngest three siblings, UW4 did not have a relative advocating for her school education. Instead, there was indifference or, even worse, discouragement among her family and neighbours. Until today, UW4 struggles with the fact that she was not able to continue her education like other children.

Those days, they didn't realize the value of education. When I was stopped from schooling, no one commented about it. [...] I was wanting to really go, but then, when I used to share this with my neighbours and my family members, they said: "But your family situation is not good. Your mother is like that and you as an elder daughter have to take care. You cannot think of going to school." My father and grandfather also told me: "Think of your family situation and don't imagine that you can go for schooling. Don't look at children who are going to school and that you are not able to go. Your family situation is like that, so you have to sacrifice."

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack of education

UW4 reacts to her lack of school education with regret and disappointment until today. She knows that education might have changed her life and views herself as being below others. To her, those who went to school are:

[...] doing very good. They are working and their way of talking, their lifestyle is different, whereas I am like this. I'm not up to that level. My level of life is very low.

More than being disappointed, UW4 experiences her life as a struggle. She suffers and feels helpless in the face of her current job situation.

Because I have no education, I am suffering and I have no hope, no scope in my life. Because I'm not able to go for work, I have to depend on labour work. [...] Everyday it's a struggle. It's a tough time for me to live every day.

Though UW4 takes the view that her mother was in a worse situation when comparing it to her own life, she also states that the reason lies mainly in her mother's blindness. Still, along with her husband, UW4 is able to feed and support her family without education. It's a daily struggle, which is why UW4 wants to enable her children to have a better and brighter future:

I am making everybody study. I struggle, but I want them to study, because I did not study. [...] I wanted to [...] but I didn't, but I want my children to be educated and stand on their own legs, because I know I'm suffering and I don't want that to happen to my children. I want my children to come up in life. Whatever I can, I can give my struggle, so that they are able to lead a good life. Not like me.

6. Consequences: Effects of the lack of education on mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

EW4's lack of school education has left deep marks on her mindset, behaviour and self-perception. Her opinion on marriage, role models, decision taking and voting reveals how much collectivism has shaped her. She did not form her own opinion but adopted the prevalent ones. When looking at her answers regarding arranged marriages, it is striking how much she internalized the collectivistic thought structures around her. She neither questions being married at the age of twelve nor does she hold it to be wrong:

Interviewer: Who decided about your husband? That you have to marry that man?

UW4: My uncle.

Interviewer: Have you ever felt that you should have been given the opportunity to decide about your husband or the bridegroom?

UW4: No, no, no. I won't do that. Only the elders have to do.

However, UW4 does not only subordinate to her parents' and elders' will. More than that, she refuses to assume responsibility for her choices and, ultimately, for her life. Instead, she hands all responsibility over to her parents and approves being dependent on them:

Interviewer: What do you think, does the bridegroom have to be arranged by the parents or by the bride?

UW4: No, no, no. Only the parents have to do. Only then it'll be good, because if I look for a boy, then I have to take care of all the responsibilities. But if the parents look for a boy, then parents also will take responsibility along with me, making my life better. So why should I alone take responsibility? It should be the parents. Because they chose a boy for me, now if anything happens in my side, you know, any problem with me, then my parents will come and support me. Or if there is any problem with him, they will support, because they selected the boy. So, both sides my parents will support in order to help us lead a life.

But there is more:

- Her opinion on the division of roles between husband and wife is deeply patriarchal

Husband means, he is a big person in the family. [...] Wife means, she should be a person who has to adjust everything, listen to husband, listen to children, listen to elders in the family and do everything. Even if the husband says to do certain things, it's the wife who has to do everything and make the family keep moving. So, she should be very understanding and very patient. [...] Husband means, sometimes he'll be very serious. Sometimes, when he returns from work, we don't know how serious he will be. We as a wife have to be very calm and approach him calmly. So as wives, we have to adjust and go.

- Although she experienced DV, she did not rebel or walk away from it. Instead, she subordinated.

UW4: He was an alcoholic. So, every time he came home from work he used to shout. Whether something or other, he would talk and he would hit me. But now, after my daughter started going to the college, that doesn't happen anymore. He's calm, he's very good, he's approaching, he talks and things go very calm.

Interviewer: While getting the beatings, have you ever thought that you should leave the family and go to your mother's house or elsewhere, leaving this family?

UW4: No, I never thought, because if I go, what will happen to the poor children that I have? [...] If I leave and go, then the children will be crying and they will be in the street. So, they're my children and when they cry, then it's a problem for me. So, it's better if I cry and take care of the family than making my children struggle in the life. So, I will tolerate everything and be at home.

- Although she and her husband discuss about their expenditures on an equal level and her husband admits that UW4 does a better job than he does, he ultimately remains responsible

We discuss and do, but we won't do like that. If I do an expense, he agrees and if he does anything, I agree. So mostly we discuss. It is very transparent. We talk about it and do. So, there is no such thing whether I am better or he is better. Even if it is a small thing, we discuss and do. (Starts laughing) But however, he spends more than me. I am very, very careful in spending, because I won't spend so much. Because I know as a woman, I should be very careful in spending because of our family situation. (Laughs) My husband

used to compliment me and say: "You're very good. You're spending very less and you are able to manage. I am not able to do like you."

- UW4 let her father-in-law decide about how many children she and her husband should have

- Her view on the division of roles and tasks between boys and girls is traditional

The older boy went up to fifth class only, because boys cannot take care of the family work. So, we girls have to do. And when we were taking care of the family, the boy went up to fifth class.

- She does not know the (exact) age of her own children
- Though she supports voting, she is still influenced by her parents' opinion and does not seem to have thought about it on her own

Right from my childhood I witnessed my parents casting their vote on that particular symbol, so I'm convinced I'm more comfortable casting my vote for the hand symbol.

Yet, there are also two aspects in her life, where she was and still is self-determined in her decisions:

- She knows about contraceptives and has a justified reason for why she chose to not take them

Because my first child died, I wanted to value every conceiving and every childbirth and all my deliveries were normal from then onwards. Because of that, I did not want to use any tablets and I did not undergo family planning surgery. After the death of my first child, I was VERY careful. [...] All my children were born healthy and I never had any mind that I should use anything to stop becoming pregnant. I never liked contraceptives and I never used any kind of them. ALL my children are now healthy.

- She is able to move around freely

5.3.2.11 Evaluation UW5

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW5 dropped out of school during 5th standard and did not graduate from school. Besides her domestic chores, she takes care of the family's cow and thus supplements her husband's income.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

In the interview, UW5 explains that she did not experience encouragement from anyone throughout her school time. She nevertheless attained good results and enjoyed going to school. Despite her good performance and the teachers trying to persuade her parents to let her continue her education, they decide to take her out of school during 5th standard. Since both parents have to work to keep the family running, UW5 is made to stay back and take charge of the domestic chores.

There was no encouragement as such or someone who encouraged. But when I was in 5th standard, my parents decided to stop me, because of my family situation and no one to take care of the family work. Being a girl, I was made to stay back and take care of the family work. But I was doing very good in my fifth grade and my teachers also came and told my parents not to stop me, but my father said no. "We are stopping, because we want her to get married." So, they stopped me from school. I had nothing to say.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

UW5 comes from a poor and very traditional family. Both parents are illiterate labour workers who considered their son's education more important than their daughters'. UW5's brother was able to complete 10th standard, whereas she and her older sister were taken out of school as soon as they reached puberty. UW5's parents raised their children with a deeply patriarchal and traditional mindset. Not only was their son allowed to attend school until 10th standard while their daughters had to discontinue their education and work at home, but they were forced to marry a stranger at the age of 12. Furthermore, domestic tasks were delegated solely to the daughters while the son was allowed to play.

We are girls and we have to do the household work. Boys usually don't do. They just play around and go around. They won't do any household work.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that hampered school attendance and the further education

UW5's father plays a key role in denying his daughter the right to school education. Although UW5's teachers tried to convince him from the opposite, he maintained his position. Being too poor to educate all three of his children, he decided to arrange marriages for his two daughters early in their lives and prioritize his son. UW5 recalls:

[...] nobody said anything about me stopping from the school. [...] my father was very particular and especially after I attended my puberty, he didn't want me to go to school, so they stopped me. [...] those days they did not know about the value of studies. [...] My family situation was such that both parents used to go out for labour work and there was no one to cook and take the food for them. So, they just dropped me from going to school.

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack of education

UW5 deeply regrets her early school drop-out. Not only does she observe differences in talking between herself and those who are educated:

I won't talk so much, so bold, so clearly. I will do very slow and my talking will not be that good.

More than that, she knows that her living standard would be different today had she studied:

[...] if I would have studied, I would have been in a job or I would have got a better earning or better position. Now I feel that because I'm not studied, I'm struggling with the labour and not earning.

Although she believes to be in a better position than her mother when she was the same age, UW5 wants to educate and support her children so that they may lead an even better life than she does.

I want to give education to my children, because I wanted to study, but I couldn't study. And I want to manage, I want them to study and not be like me. I want to give them good education.

6. Consequences: Effects of the lack education on mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

That UW5 was taken out of school during fifth class, has immense effects on her mindset, behaviour and self-perception today. Being only 12 years old, her parents forced her to marry a man she did not know and who was 11 years her senior. Although she cried, she did not rebel much:

My parents decided that I should get married. I didn't want to get married. I wanted to study. I was crying, crying for so many days that I would not get married, because I did not have any interest to get married. But my parents and relatives were forcing me to get married at that age. [...] He is a distant relative, because my parents wanted that. And though I actually didn't like the marriage, I was not for marrying, how much ever I said,

my parents were not going to leave me. So, what is the point in me just struggling? So, I said to myself: "Okay, whatever my parents say, let me marry." So, I married.

Despite this dramatic and decisive experience, she did not question her arranged marriage and supports this tradition even today. Unsurprisingly, her explanation is not only shaped by the collectivistic mindset she grew up with, but also reveals a lacking volition to scrutinize and challenge traditions:

Only if the parents arrange the marriage, it'll be good. Because when we are in trouble, they are the ones who will support us and who will guide us. So, we have to do as for the parents' wish only. We should not decide another one. If the marriage is arranged by the elders, only then the elders are respected. And when the elders are respected, throughout the life the couple will have the fear towards the elders and follow certain [?means]. If not, the elders will not be respected and if the bride and bridegroom get married neglecting the elders, their life will not be good.

UW5's lack of school education is most evident in her contradicting statements, though. When looking at her attitude towards marriages, for example, she equalizes her husband with a god and expects him to treat her the same way:

A husband is equal to God. When I got married, they gave me to him, so he's my God. [...] Wife means, she should also be like that. She should be respected and should be treated equally. How we are respecting, same the husband also should treat.

At the same time, she deems her husband's beatings and his indifferent behaviour towards her as normal and does not question him. When asked, how he approaches her, she states:

UW5: He is like normal, like anybody else. He is not so very affectionate, nor very aversion. [...] (laughs) He's neither too affectionate nor too bad but he's just normal. [...]

Interviewer: Has your husband beaten or abused you?

UW5: Yes, beatings were there. [...] now he doesn't do. Because my son is studying in high school, he stopped. But I have been beaten up many times.

Interviewer: How did you respond? And how did you feel, when he used to beat you?

UW5: What to do? I have to just bear everything and keep moving in life.

Although she believes man and woman to be equal, she lives a marriage characterized by traditional and deeply patriarchal role models:

- Her husband takes care of decisions concerning income and expenditures. She has nothing to say:

If I want anything, he is the one who decides about buying it for me, no matter if it's personal or family. I used to buy many things, because I am the one who is doing the household work, so if I want some things or any article, then I would desire to get it. But then I have to ask him. So, if it is needed, then only he will give me the order to buy. If not, I won't buy. [...] Sometimes I feel like I want to buy something, but then again, I have to ask him for the money. Therefore, I don't buy.

- She does not dare to question her husband's authority:

[...] we cannot decide anything. Whatever he decides, we have to follow. We cannot decide anything against that. [...] We have to abide to his decision. We have to listen to his decision and follow only his decision, because he's a man. So, we cannot have a different idea to his decision. We have to listen and follow. That is how we have to run.

- Her husband does not allow her to move around freely

I never have that freedom. Up to the shop I can go. But I have to tell and go. If I have to go to my house or out of town, then I have to go with my husband.

- She lets her husband and mother-in-law decide about the number of children she should get

There are two further areas in her life, where UW5's lack of school education becomes apparent:

- She lost a child due to her ignorance of pregnancies and the required check-ups

Since it was my first pregnancy, I was not knowing anything. I did not go for any check-up. And also, when the doctors asked me when I stopped feeling the movement of the foetus, I didn't remember. I didn't even know that I should have kept that in mind. I was not aware of all those things.

- Although she considers voting important, she does not vote independently but hinges her decision on the opinion of her husband and family:

Whoever my husband decides. He will tell to put for them, so I will put.

The only area in UW5's life, where she displays liberal thinking, is her attitude towards the education of her children. Here, she very clearly states:

Both are my children, so I would definitely treat them both in the same way. I will not show any differentiation, because they are MY children.

5.3.2.11 Evaluation UW6

1. Phenomenon: Education

UW6 completed 5th standard and entered into 6th grade before she was forced to discontinue her education. She has no permanent or secure job.

2. Causal Condition for the phenomenon: Reasons for school dropout

Like UW5, UW6 was taken out of school at the age of 12, because her father intended to marry her. Although her brother took efforts to support the family financially and thus enable UW6 to continue her studies, her father was determined in his decision.

I completed up to fifth standard and entered into sixth standard. Then I was made to get married. I wanted to continue my studies, but due to my family situation my parents made me to get married. Though my brother wanted to work as a labourer to support my studies, my father was very insisting that I should get married, because my bridegroom was my father's sister's son. My father thought it to be a nice opportunity that his own sister's son can get married to his daughter and that this would give me a secure life.

3. Context: Family situation (economically, educational, sociological)

UW6's family suffers from economic poverty. As her parents did not study themselves and earn their living through agricultural labour work, they could not afford to send all their children to school. UW6 was the only child receiving education and even she had to drop out of school after fifth grade due to financial reasons.

4. Intervening conditions: Incidences that hampered school attendance and the further education

Although UW6's brother went for labour work to enable his sister to continue her schooling, there was no adult advocating for her.

When asked, what her relatives' and neighbours' response to her early marriage was, she states:

My neighbours' situation was like my family's situation, so they all said it's good that the daughter listens to the parents. Parents will decide good only.

5. Action strategies: Response to the lack of education

UW6 suffers from her early school drop out until today. Being forced to marry her cousin at the age of 12, she did not know how to rebel against her parents' decision. Her education hitherto clearly did not suffice to empower her or give her enough standing to deal with the ill-treatment of her in-laws.

I was feeling that I should study, but due to the family situation I was forced to get married. When I went to my in-laws' house, it was a very big family and I had to take big responsibilities in the house. It was a very big burden for me. Also, I did not conceive immediately, so my in-laws scolded me and even hit me. Because of that I had to get back to my mother's house for two years, without staying with my husband in my in-laws' house.

UW6 deeply regrets being forced to drop out of school at such a young age. She is aware that education would have made her more independent, both financially and socially. She does not know how to cope with her overall situation and seems to have lost hope:

If I had been educated, I would have gotten into some kind of job. Because there is no education, I have no opportunity to get into any job. And because of that, I have to depend on my husband and his family. Whatever they do I have to accept and do everything for them at home. Even now I think that without education, how am I going to bring up my children? Without any job or education, how is it possible for me to take care of my family and children? [...] Without education, it's very difficult to come up in life. If there is no education, even to travel to a nearby town also is not possible, because to get into the right bus, we need to be educated.

6. Consequences: Effects of the lack of education on mindset, behaviour, self-perception and living standard today

UW6's lack of school education has clearly shaped and influenced her mindset, behaviour and self-perception. She did not develop any self-confidence and realizes herself how much she depends on her husband as well as her in-laws. UW6 takes care of her children and the domestic chores and is not allowed to decide anything on her own:

- She has no say regarding income and expenditures
- She was not allowed to even decide about her own body. Instead, her in-laws cajoled her into becoming pregnant at the age of only 12 years. Though the

doctors advised the family against such an early pregnancy, they did not listen.

UW6 had nothing to say:

Initially, immediately after the marriage, I had three abortions. So, when we went to the doctor, that time, all the doctors said: "She's young age. She's very weak. She's not in a child bearing age. That is why she is not able to conceive."

- Eventually, her husband resolved about the number of children she should get.

UW6 did not rebel or question his authority:

My husband decided how many children we should have. (.) After having twins, I first thought I should stop. No more children. But then, in my husband's family everybody said: "Since they're twins, we're not sure whether they will live long." And they were very small with very less weight. So, my husband decided to go in with the next delivery.

- She also does not rebel against the domestic violence she experiences

Sometimes, when he gets angry, he hits me. Even then, after receiving the beatings, I have to bear the beating and then take care of the family work because I have to adjust and go in the family. [...] Before, when I was not having children, I never liked to stay. Whenever that kind of hitting came, I used to feel like going to my mother's house. Because that was a young age for me, after quarrelling and after my husband hit me, I went to my house in the beginning. If I go now, at this age, who will take care of my children? That is why, even how much ever he fights with me and hits me, I will never think of going away from the house, because of the children.

- Her husband does not allow her to move around freely

I can go out of the house only with the permission of my husband. Without my husband's permission, I cannot do anything. Only with his permission can I go out of the house.

UW6's lack of school education is not only mirrored in her helplessness and inability to speak up for herself. It also influenced her mindset and her behaviour:

- Her understanding of role models between husband and wife is patriarchal

Usually, when the conflict or argument comes, I'm the one who always goes in a passive way, without standing stubborn.

- Though she supports voting and says that she independently decides whom she elects, she also states that she and her husband will always vote for the same person

And yet, she not only considers herself to be in a better position than her mother was when she was UW6's age:

When my mother was 28, she was struggling a LOT, because there was no education. Also, the situation was VERY bad. So, she was in a very bad situation. Though I received

only very little education, I am at least aware of many things. But my mother was illiterate, therefore she was not aware of many things in life.

Like UW5, she also desires to educate all of her children equally in order to give them a better and brighter future:

They have to come up in life and they have to study and they have to stand on their own without depending on others and they have to get into a job. But most important, they have to study. This is my dream. Because I did not study, I want my children to study.

5.2.3 Evaluation of the results of axial coding

The objective of axial coding was to establish an internal connection between the different categories, subcategories, codes and dimensions within the individual interviews. The results are unique portraits of 12 Dalit women that provide insight into two things: 1) how much the completion of school education depends on the influence of the parents and 2) how much the women's behaviour and mindset are shaped by the collectivistic and patriarchal thought patterns around them - even if they completed their school education.

Subsequently, these two central thoughts shall be described in more detail.

Influence of the parents on the completion of school education

The extent of the parental influence on the completion or discontinuation of the women's school career is remarkable. Although the financial situation of the family plays a substantial role as well, the parent's attitude towards education and their will to support their daughter is far exceeding economic factors. Though the women who successfully completed their education come from rather poor families as well, there are two major differences when compared to the women who dropped out of school. Their parents:

- 1) received, on average, more education
- 2) were eager to educate their children.

It is noteworthy that not one of the educated women has a sibling who did not complete at least 12 years of school. On the contrary, the majority even went to university. When looking at the women who dropped out of school, the opposite is the case: almost all of

their siblings discontinued their education as well, many didn't even go to school at all. Only UW3 and UW5 each have an older sibling who was able to complete 10th standard.

Reasons for the parental support or the lack of it are quite homogenous. Those parents who support their children's school education mostly wanted to give them a better future than they themselves had, whereas the parents who took their children out of school mostly stated that they did so out of financial reasons. There are exceptions on both sides of course. EW2 for example was mainly made to study because there was no male child in her family and she, as the eldest daughter, was supposed to take over the responsibility for the future of her family.

UW1 on the other hand, was not directly forced to discontinue her education but she chose to do so herself. Indirectly, her school drop-out is nevertheless related to her parents, since her father had a massive drinking problem and did not support his wife and children. Seeing the struggle of her mother, UW1 decided to stay back home and help her mother in the domestic chores as well as through labour work.

Influence of collectivistic and patriarchal thought patterns on the women's empowerment

The influence of the collectivistic and patriarchal thought structures on the women's empowerment is surprisingly strong. Even those women who earn their own money, who dare to speak up for themselves and who advocate for equality within the marriage are still influenced by the collectivism and patriarchy around them. None of the women who completed their school education chose her husband herself but they all agreed to an arranged marriage; many are restrained in their physical mobility and most of the women let their husband, parents or in-laws take care of all income and expenditure decisions. What is striking though, is that the extent to which these traditional thought patterns influence the women, increases with less education. There thus seems to be a strong link between education and the challenging of norms, traditions and fixed behaviour patterns.

5.2.4 Findings of selective coding

In a way, selective coding is axial coding on a level of higher abstraction (Breuer 2009:92). It depicts an important part in GT as it helps to analyse the data more goal-oriented and to revise its validity, reliability and credibility.

Selective coding is “the process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all other categories to that category” (Borgatti 2005:para.9). The essential idea of selective coding is thus to develop a theme around which all else is centred (:para.9). Its primary function is to integrate the theory and make it dense and saturated (Glaser & Holton 2004:para.54). The criteria for establishing a core category are:

- that it is *central*
- that it reoccurs *frequently* in the data and becomes a stable pattern
- that it *relates effortlessly and meaningfully* with other categories
- that as soon as its details are analytically elaborated, the theory will *develop noticeably* (Breuer 2009:93)
- that it “is completely variable and has a ‘carry through’ within the emerging theory by virtue of its relevance and explanatory power” (Glaser & Holton 2004: para.54)

To find the central theme within the core categories³⁴, the respective categories will be compared thoroughly in the following subsection.

Central theme of the *phenomenon*

As deliberately selected beforehand, half of the Dalit women interviewed successfully completed 12 years of school, while the other half dropped out in fifth standard or earlier. Interestingly, a strong pattern emerges on both sides that goes well beyond the selection that took place prior to the interviews: all of the women who completed their school education managed to get into permanent, well-paid jobs, whereas all of the women who dropped out of school depend on labour work and struggle to support their family. Education as a positive influencing factor for financial protection thus seems to be the central theme of the phenomenon.

³⁴ For detailed information compare table 5.4

Central theme of the *context*

As already laid out in the previous subsection, the family situation (economical, educational and sociological) plays a key role regarding the continuation, respectively discontinuation of the women's schooling career. It is significant that all the women who completed their school education have parents who are, in comparison to the parents of the women who dropped out of school, more educated. Although they rarely attained school leaving certificates themselves, they wanted their children to be educated all the more. EW2 recounts that though her mother studied up to 10th standard, she was not allowed to get into a paid job. Instead, her tasks were confined to domestic chores and child care. Seeing her own situation, she wanted her daughters to be better off. EW2 calls it her "mother's sacrifice" and explains that "she motivated us, because she was not educated. She wanted us girls to be educated. Though we have got a good position, it is because of my mother". EW3 similarly tells that her mother had a "very difficult background of studying [...]. Therefore, she wanted me to study well, so she inspired me and motivated me in my studies."

By contrast, all of the women who dropped out of school have illiterate parents who struggled to even feed their children properly. It is of no surprise that they either took their children out of school again or, as is the case with UW1 and UW3, did not prevent their school drop-out.

Looking at the interviews, there thus seems to be a correlation between the parents' education and the educational attainments of their children. While the siblings of those women who completed their schooling also attained school leaving certificates and many even university degrees, the siblings of those women who dropped out of school, were also not able to complete their education. Some did not even attend school at all, mostly for financial reasons. UW4 recalls that she was forced to drop out of school, since there was only one parent earning money. She states that:

Only my father was going for labour work, my mother never went, because she's blind. Because of that only I stopped from school. I took care of the household work and also helped my father in his daily labour. [...] So, this is one of the reasons, why I as the oldest daughter in the family had to stay back and take care.

Similarly, UW1 dropped out of school solely for financial reasons. Seeing the struggle of her mother, she decided to leave school during first standard. Though she would have

preferred to continue her education, she understood that her mother needed her help more:

I wanted to go to school, but because of my family situation, because my father was not treating my mother properly, not giving money, my mother was struggling to manage, so I opted to stay back and help my mother.

Interestingly, the educational level of the parents did not only influence their children's education, but also the work they were supposed to do when returning home from school. While most of the women with school leaving certificates had time to study, all of the women without education had to help with domestic chores. That it was only them, and not their brothers, who had to take care of the household, is not questioned by any of the women. UW5 for example laughs while explaining that "we are girls and we have to do the household work. Boys usually don't do. They just play around and go around. They won't do any household work."

In summary, it can be said that the central and overarching theme of the *context* is the influence of the parents' educational level on the schooling career of their children.

Central theme of the *causal conditions*

The *causal conditions* for an early discontinuation of schooling, respectively its successful completion, are closely linked to the *context* as both disclose how powerful the parental influence on their children's school education is. The women who were able to complete their education did so because of their parents' support and struggle, whereas the women who dropped out of school did not receive any support from their parents. On the contrary, in most cases the parents' decision was intentional. They were aware of their children's wish to continue their education, yet deliberately chose to ignore their resentment. UW5, for example, had to forgo her education for her marriage. Being only 12 years old, she was afraid of marrying a man she had never seen before and tried to revolt but, eventually, gave in:

I didn't want to get married. I wanted to study. I was crying, crying for so many days that I wouldn't get married [...]. But my parents and relatives were forcing me to get married at that age. [...] And though I actually didn't like the marriage, [...] how much ever I said, my parents were not going to leave me. So, what's the point in me just struggling? So, I said to myself: "Okay, whatever my parents say, let me marry." So, I married.

In other cases, the parents did not actively force their daughter to drop out of school, but, on the other hand, did nothing to keep her in school as well. Like UW1, UW3 left school by her own choice. How voluntary her decision actually was, remains debatable for two reasons: 1) she did not drop out of school out of lacking interest, but to support her struggling family, 2) there was no one to advise her against the decision she took. Until today, UW3 remembers how her parents did not comment about her school drop-out. When asked for the reason, she simply answers:

Because I was making food for my mother, when she was going for labour work. So, nobody said anything.

Conversely, the parents of those women who completed their schooling valued education so much that they decided to sacrifice their money, time and work to send their daughter to school. EW6 remembers how her father encouraged her to study:

Up to which level you want to study, you study. I have no problem. Even if there is no money and I struggle, I will make an attempt to make you study whatever your aim is.

This theme occurs again and again. While EW3 was encouraged by her mother, EW2 quotes her father who, being very supportive of his daughter's education, declared:

I haven't studied and I want my daughter to study and stand on her own leg. [...] I don't want them [his daughters] to struggle like me. They have to do their jobs and they have to take care of their lives. I don't want them to depend on others, without education.

To sum up, not only does the successful continuation of the women's school education hinges on their family's financial situation but, more than that, on how much their parents value education and hold it to be important and thus promote and support it.

Central theme of the *intervening conditions*

When looking at further intervening conditions for a discontinuation, respectively successful completion of the women's school education, two major aspects emerged during the interviews: the women with completed school education predominantly name the hostel as an influencing factor, while the women who left school mention their family situation as well as the discouragement of relatives and neighbours as additional reasons for their school drop-out. For the latter group, their parents' decision to take them out of school was often backed by family members and neighbours. UW4

remembers how she tried to find someone supporting her education but no one showed understanding. Instead, they tried to dissuade her from continuing her schooling:

I was wanting to really go, but then, when I used to share this with my neighbours and my family members, they said: "But your family situation is not good [...] and you as an elder daughter have to take care. You cannot think of going to school." My father and grandfather also told me: "Think of your family situation and don't imagine that you can go for schooling. Don't look at children who are going to school and that you are not able to go. Your family situation is like that, so you have to sacrifice."

UW6, who had to discontinue her education at the age of 12 to marry her cousin, remembers the indifference towards her early school drop-out. When asked for the reason, she answers:

My neighbours' situation was like my family's situation, so they all said it's good that the daughter listens to the parents. Parents will decide good only.

As opposed to that, the women who completed their schooling successfully did so, because they were not only supported by their parents but were also encouraged in their educational institution. UW1 recounts that

[t]here were some things that my parents did not tell me, but they did tell us in the hostel, like how we have to be in our discipline as a girl child. [...] they also educated us, gave the value of education [...] And this is something that I am fortunate to have. [...] Wherever we go, the discipline, the spirituality and the punctuality and the value that we gained there is, throughout my life, helping me.

UW3 similarly states how "the hostel wardens [...] motivated me in my studies" and that "all teachers, correspondence³⁵, everybody motivated me". UW5 even claims that "only after coming to the hostel, my whole life changed in me. LOTS of difference, lots of change happened in me. [...] During those days, we were nurtured very much".

Clearly, the success of the women's schooling career is not only influenced by their parents alone, but also by their family, neighbours as well as the educational institution itself.

³⁵ In the particular case of the here mentioned hostel, correspondence stands for headmistress.

Central theme of the *action strategies*

The central theme of the action strategies is the positive influence of school education on the job situation, the living standard, as well as on coping strategies during hardships.

How the women react to their successfully completed education, respectively the lack of their education, differs noticeably. While the women with school leaving certificates were all able to easily get into their first permanent job, none of the women who dropped out of school managed to do so. On the contrary, all of them depend on low-paid, irregular labour work and struggle to support and feed their family.

More than that, while all women of the former group achieved better living standards compared their mothers at the same age, only four out of six women without education are able to claim that. UW1 desperately states:

I appreciate my mother, because in spite of my father beating her, scolding her, fighting without giving money, she was trying to uplift the family with her struggle. So, she is better when compared to me. In my mother's life, my father was there, but he was not supporting. He was a drunkard and he was beating. I had a husband, but three years ago I lost him. I am a nobody and left on my own.

Although UW4 declares that she is in a better position than her mother, she does not trace her situation to her own achievements but to the fact that her mother was blind:

We are able to have a better life when compared to my mother. But my mother's life was a very hardship, because her family was only living on the father's earnings and she had many children. Seven children and my father was the only earning person.

Furthermore, many of those women who discontinued their education, find themselves in financially, as well as emotionally difficult living conditions and struggle to cope with them adequately. UW5 states that

Because I have no education, I am suffering and I have no hope, no scope in my life. Because I'm not able to go for work, I have to depend on labour work.

Contrary to this, the women who finished their schooling feel confident about themselves, decision taking and handling difficult situations. Exemplarily, EW6 shall be quoted as she feels independent and strong and thus claims that she is “capable of managing any problem in [her] life without depending on others”.

Central theme of the *consequences*

The central theme of the consequences is the partial impact of a successfully completed secondary education on the empowerment of the interviewees. The analysis of the 12 interviews gradually but clearly revealed that those women who continued their schooling complied with much more empowerment indicators than those women who had to drop out of school before sixth standard. In the following, the individual points of the just mentioned empowerment indicators will be listed one by one and subsequently related to the two groups of women. It shall thus be demonstrated that the completion of school education can have, at least partly, significant effects on the empowerment of Dalit women.

Choices surrounding sexuality, marriage, childbearing, and the exercise of reproductive rights

When analysing the women's choices surrounding sexuality, marriage, childbearing and the exercise of reproductive rights, the results were rather mixed. Against one of the presumptions of this study, none of the women with completed school education chose her husband herself, including the two unmarried interviewees who declared that they plan to let their parents select a husband for them. As opposed to that, amongst the women who dropped out of school, two chose their husbands independently. Interestingly though, all 12 interviewees were in favour of arranged marriages, even those who selected their husband autonomously. What is noteworthy, however, are the age differences at the time of marriage. While all uneducated women got married before turning 20, the women who completed their education were at least 21. Two women of the latter group were not even married at the time of the interviews, both of them being in their late twenties.

Wide differences between the groups could also be seen with regard to questions of sexuality, childbearing and the exercise of reproductive rights. While none of the women who dropped out of school were allowed to decide over the number of children she should get, five out of six women with education took that decision along with their husband or, if unmarried, stated that they plan to do so. What is more, the actual number of children each woman has also differs considerably between the two groups. While all of the women without education have at least two children, the women who

completed their schooling mostly have one child, two being the highest number. Three of the women with school leaving certificates have no children at all, as they are either not yet married or got married only recently. The differences in numbers may be related to the fact that the women who dropped out of school married much earlier. However, since the women who continued their education did not mention any further desire to have children, it seems unlikely that their number of children will increase much within the coming years.

The influence of education also displays itself regarding the knowledge about, as well as the use of contraceptives. While four out of six women with lacking school education have never heard of contraceptives and none uses them, only one out of six educated women has never heard of contraceptives and two of the women are actively making use of it.

Decision making within the family (including economic agency, such as spending decisions and bargaining power)

The impact of school education on taking decisions within the family presents itself rather inconclusive. While only two out of six women with education claim that they are in charge of spending decisions, the situation among the women with lacking education depicts itself only slightly better: here, half of the women are free to decide about their earned money. However, it needs to be said that two of those three women lost their husband and are thus forced to manage their income and expenditures alone.

Physical mobility

A successfully completed education seems to have no impact on physical mobility, as the majority of the women (four out of six in each group) are able to move around freely and without any restrictions.

Participation in labour, land, and financial markets (including the women's attitudes about their work)

Although none of the interviewees participated in labour, land or financial markets, the women's attitudes about their work clearly differs. As all of the women with school leaving certificates entered into well-paid gainful employment, none of them are

discontent with her work situation or the way they are treated by their superiors. Conversely, the job situation of the women who dropped out of school shows great differences:

- They do not have permanent job contracts
- Wages are so low that they struggle to feed their family and educate their children
- Many experience ill-treatment at work, often due to their caste
- The women feel powerless in doing anything against the mistreatment

[...] what to do? I have to think of my children. I need work, I need money. See, thinking of my children, I just cannot do anything about it, when they talk about me or when they differentiate. I have to just keep quiet, do the work and come. Because of my children.

Attitudes about son preference

Concerning son preferences, there is no clearly discernible difference between the women who completed their schooling and those who dropped out of school early, as all twelve women state that they would never differentiate between boys and girls.

Experienced (domestic/spousal) violence

Sadly, a strong difference between the two groups of interviewees exists regarding domestic violence. While all six women who completed their education emphasise that they never experienced spousal violence, four out of six women with incomplete schooling have experienced beatings, some from a very young age onwards. This connection was also visible during open coding, where the lexical analysis of the category 'Marriage/Sexuality/Childbearing' showed more intersections with the words 'fight(ing)' and 'hit(tin)' than with 'arranged' or 'bridegroom'.

As most of the women who suffer from domestic violence feel trapped in their situation and do not know how to cope with it, they simply accept the violence:

Sometimes, when he gets angry, he hits me. Even then, after receiving the beatings, I have to bear the beating and then take care of the family work because I have to adjust and go in the family.

Engagement with collective action and politics

The influence of education on the voting behaviour of the interviewees is striking. Although all 12 women support voting and call it their “right”, two of the six women who dropped out of school, are open to bribery and do not even seem to be aware of their misconduct:

It's good. If I don't cast my vote, they won't give me family card, they won't give me ration, they won't give me rice. They won't involve me in any kind of welfare programme. Only if I cast my vote, I will be given all these privileges. Therefore, I have to vote.

Conversely, none of the women who completed their schooling made any statement indicating corruptive thinking or behaviour. Instead, they regard voting as a right and responsibility:

For every citizen, it is a right to vote. So, it is our duty and our responsibility to select a good leader. So, we have to put our vote and select a good leader.

Self-reported attitude changes, including cognitive changes, such as increased confidence, greater autonomy and feeling more valued and respected

The completion of school education showed its greatest influence on the women's self-reported attitude changes. While all women with school leaving certificates unitarily state that they feel more respected in their families and in the society, the women who dropped out of school report about feelings worthlessness and insignificance:

[N]ow I know, because there's no education, they treat me very badly and they nickname me and they talk bad about me, that I don't have anything. I did not bring anything, I'm not worth.

Even within their own marriages, they are not treated as equal partners at eye level. Since their husbands are mostly uneducated as well, conflicts are not solved by talking but through violence or unilateral decisions. EW2, who herself feels respected and well-treated by her husband, describes the impact of lacking school education as follows:

Husbands are usually authoritative and they treat everyone as a slave. Not in my life, but generally this is what the prevailing relationship is like. Husband means, he is the superior. [...] Wherever there is no education or job for women, the slavery and the dominating thing happens between husband and wife. With good education and work, this doesn't happen, because if husband and wife are educated and they are working, then even the husband helps [...] in maintaining the family. Both are very understanding and they share. But when there is no education, the wife is treated very badly.

Clearly, the women who completed their schooling know how much education changed them and recognize their own worth:

I'm educated. I need not work in the same place, where I am not given the respect or regard for my work. There is no need for me to work in a place, where my dignity is questioned.

More than that, most of the women feel more comfortable in taking decisions, they have the courage to speak up and feel more capable to cope with difficult situations. For the women who dropped out of school, the opposite is the case mostly. They rarely dare to stand up for their rights, interest and their dignity. Also, a part of the women visibly struggles to find ways of coping effectively with heavy blows of fate:

I feel that if I had gone for studies, these things I wouldn't have experienced: my mother struggling, even me struggling sometimes, taking challenges, responsibility over work, taking up work at this small age. [...] I have to take care of my own family without my husband. So, this is something I feel overburdening me every time. [...] So, this is what is my life. My childhood, how I struggled. Even now I struggle, without any guarantee for my job. So, no education brought me to this.

Motivation to question regressive norms and institutions that perpetuate the subordination of women

The motivation to question regressive norms and institutions that perpetuate the subordination of women is rather low in both groups of interviewees. As already mentioned, none of the women with completed school education picked her husband autonomously, but they unitarily subordinated to their parents' choice for them. Even those women who did select their own partner support arranged marriages as they know that they cannot count on their parents' support otherwise.

I cannot demand anything from my parents. Even when I face some problem or difficulty in my family, I cannot go to my parents for support, because they will say: "You have decided about your life partner, so you have to manage. Don't ask for help. Don't ask for our support." We are left like that. So, if parents select, then they will be with us during struggles and problems. They'll help also, they'll support.

However, the motivation to question regressive norms and thought structures tends to be lower within the group of less educated women. None of them doubts the hierarchical structures within their families, where everyone else is superior to them. They not only let others decide about their body, their time and their physical mobility

but are convinced themselves that everyone else is more important than they are. UW4 states:

Wife means, she should be a person who has to adjust everything, listen to husband, listen to children, listen to elders in the family and do everything. Even if the husband says to do certain things, it's the wife who has to do everything and make the family keep moving. So, she should be very understanding and very patient.

This statement is a marked contrast to what EW3 states confidently:

I'm very focused on quality and I am educated. So, when I tell certain things, others may not like it and they want it the way they like it. But I cannot go according to their ways. So, I would still insist, because I know what I decide and what I do is the best for me and I would insist that this should happen.

The importance of a completed secondary school education shows, at least partly, significant effects on the empowerment level of Dalit women. Together with the other findings, this result will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

5.3 Conclusion

By means of open, axial and selective coding, first final ideas evolved out of the data. The major narrowed-down aspects (e.g. the influence of the parents' educational level on the schooling of their children or the impact of collectivistic and patriarchal thought patterns on the women's empowerment) will be examined in more depth in the following chapter. The analysis of the afore mentioned aspects will be done through referring them back to the initial research question in order to form a valid theory that may answer the target question of this study. Additionally, major findings will be embedded in the literature framework to finalize a valid theory.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

With reference to the initial research question, the final chapter of this study summarizes and discusses the research results. Subsequently, major findings will be embedded into the already existing body of research to finalize a valid theory.

The discussion of the results will be followed by a short methodological reflection and recommendations for the field of practice. The chapter then closes with suggestions for future research, as the limited scope of this study could not cover all identified aspects.

6.2 Summary and discussion of the findings

Arising from the comprehensive data analysis, the most significant results are now reviewed and discussed, referring them to both literature and field of practice.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the lasting influence of public secondary school education on the lives and empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, South India to better comprehend the effects of their educational experiences from their own perspective. To achieve this primary objective, secondary research objectives had been set. In the following, they will be re-examined one by one, each serving as a basis for the assessment of the main research objective.

The first secondary research objective was a study of Amartya Sen's Capability Approach serving as a framework for approaching Dalit women's capability enhancement, their empowerment and well-being. While the theoretical analysis can be found in chapter 2.4, its practical implementation will follow at the end of this subsection. Research objective two encompassed a literature review on women's empowerment with specific emphasis on public school education. The assessment succeeds the study of Sen's Capability approach and is located in chapter 2.5 and 2.6. The third research objective covered a wide-ranging discussion on the socio-economic conditions in India and their impact on the situation of Dalit women. It can be found in Chapter 3. The two remaining research objectives will be covered in the subsequent sections. While objective four depicts an analysis of the perception of public school education as a critical factor for the empowerment of Dalit women, their status and

livelihood, research objective five comprises the identification of further factors that impact the empowerment of Dalit women.

Analysis of the perception of public school education as a critical factor on the empowerment of Dalit women, their status and livelihood

The question whether public school education constitutes a critical factor for the empowerment of Dalit women, their status and livelihood, has already been answered partly in chapter 5.3.4. Yet, as findings remained inconclusive to some extent, they will now be placed into a broader context, embedding them also into Sen's Capability Approach.

Considering the results of open, axial and selective coding, the main finding of the preceding chapter was that those women who continued and successfully completed their secondary schooling complied with much more empowerment indicators than those women who had to drop out of school before sixth standard. There were relevant disparities between the two study groups concerning the majority of aspects we inquired into. The differences as well as an examination of the similarities are listed below.

Concerning disparities, the women with school leaving certificates:

- entered well-paid gainful employment and are content with their work situation, as well as with the way they are treated by their superiors
- managed to achieve better living standards in comparison to their mothers, when they were the same age
- married, on average, later than the women who had to drop out of school (> 20 contrasting < 20)
- decided together with their husbands about the number of children they would like to have
- generally have more knowledge about contraceptives; two of the women also practice contraception
- never experienced domestic violence
- support voting and actively exercise their right to vote
- feel respected in their families and the society
- feel more comfortable in taking decisions
- predominantly have the courage to speak up

- recognize their own worth
- feel more capable of coping with difficult situations
- showed a slightly higher level of motivation to question regressive norms than the women who dropped out of school

Regarding similarities, in both groups:

- arranged marriages are supported, even in the two cases where the husband was chosen independently
- an equal say over spending decisions within the family remains low
- the majority of women is able to move around freely
- no evidence of son preference could be found

The findings suggest two things: 1) that a successfully completed school education influences the empowerment of Dalit women distinctively, yet not without exception and that 2) education has limits, when it comes to breaking down deeply embedded social and patriarchal constructs. Both conclusions are closely linked to each other, as the areas, in which the women's school education did not impact their empowerment, are associated with the collectivistic and patriarchal thought patterns around them. Particularly with regard to their marriages, the women subordinate their freedom of choice and action to the good of the family. Interestingly, they do not seem to suffer from being other-directed. Though educated, none of the women seem aware of her heteronomy and thus does not question it. On the contrary, most of the women are glad to hand over responsibilities, as "members of collectivist societies are often socialized in a way which allows them to enjoy their duty by subordinating their individual goals to the mission of the collective" (Höckel 2017:4).

The same applies to spending decisions. Despite their education, the women mostly do not question their inferior role or believe that decisions could be taken by them instead of their husbands, parents or in-laws:

Since they're elders in the family, I will definitely not express or talk. Because they're elders, I won't question them. I would never think: "Why are they doing like this, they could have done it in the way that I expect." Since they're experienced and older people, I'm not supposed to ask.

EW6 exemplary stands for the limits of education. In a society, where patriarchal thought patterns are so deeply entrenched that going to school has only very little impact on attitudes towards gender roles and hardly affects one's sense of individual dignity, it is not surprising that even an educated woman can be convinced that:

[a] wife should be according to the husband's and in-law's expectation. Even if the expectation is not fulfilled, she should find out and change accordingly.

Nussbaum (2003) does not explain this behaviour with collectivistic thinking alone. To her, the women reveal so called 'adaptive preferences'. It's a phenomenon mostly exhibited by women that describes *the habituation*, internalization and even preference of objectively harsh circumstances as a response to the restricted options they live in (:34). Although adaptive preferences are much more common among the women who dropped out of school, it is noteworthy that the group of educated women showed similar behaviour patterns, at least to some extent. Explanations may be sought in the kind of education they received. Saito (2003) argues that it is not enough to provide compulsory education to enhance children's capabilities, but that we need "a kind of education that makes people autonomous" (:28). Whether a different type of school (e.g. a private one) would have led to more autonomy among the women seems possible but has to remain unanswered.

However, though the successful completion of school education shows limits regarding the range of empowerment, it must be noted that empowerment is a process and can never be achieved in an absolute sense (Shamshad 2007:140). What is more, as empowerment is "a change in the context of a woman's life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life" (Biswas 2016:2009), the question that needs to be asked is not only how many empowerment indicators the women complied with, but also in how far these indicators objectively influence their well-being?

At this point, it is inevitable to again return to Amartya Sen's Capability Approach. Sen believes that the freedom to achieve well-being is of central moral importance and that having the freedom to achieve well-being is strongly related to people's functionings (that is, the combination of things a person is able to do and be). Well-being is thus not so much about mental attitudes or possessions, but the capability set of a person. As *capabilities* are opportunities, they comprise the range of real options they have

regarding the kind of life they want to lead (Kleist 2010:para.8; Saito 2003:17). Here, considerable discrepancies between the two groups of women emerge. The women who completed their education had significantly more opportunities than the women who discontinued their schooling, as the former group received unreserved support from their parents and families. Many also mentioned the hostel as a place of opportunities:

Only after coming to the hostel, my whole life changed in me. LOTS of difference, lots of change happened in me. [...] During those days, we were nurtured very much. There was lots of opportunity [...].

These opportunities continue to be enjoyed: the women with education were able to move out of caste occupations as all of them enjoy gainful employment outside the home. This in turn is associated with more resources in protecting one's bodily integrity, which also holds true for the participants of this study: none of the women with completed school education ever experienced domestic violence. Their economic independence also led to better living standards in comparison to their mothers as well as to increased respect within their family and the society, since "women who are more educated are likely to be regarded differently by their households and communities and allowed a wider range of roles and opportunities than is traditionally sanctioned" (Pande & Astone 2007:26). What is more, their acquired knowledge provided them with access to psychic and financial resources, which then translated into greater freedom regarding reproductive decisions, including matters of fertility and childbirth, as well as access to effective contraception (Kishor & Subbaiya 2005:4; Sen 2000:199). A last central aspect concerns internal qualities: although completing secondary education did not stimulate critical thinking or deepen their understanding of gendered structures of power very much, it did result in a positive self-image, as well as it fostered the ability to analyse available options. Moreover, it increased the women's political awareness and helped them to make more informed choices.

In contrast to this, the women who had to drop out of school are considerably more restricted in the range of options and opportunities they have. Their low educational levels not only leave them without reasonable employment prospects required for economic development and empowerment, but also hamper their process of political awareness necessary for their political development.

More than that, most of the women are left alone supporting their children and doing the chores. They thus carry the already mentioned double or even triple burden of work

“as they cope with housework, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment” (Momsen 2010:1). EW6 states:

Because there is no education, I have no opportunity to get into any job. And because of that, I have to depend on my husband and his family. Whatever they do I have to accept and do everything for them at home. Even now I think that without education, how am I going to bring up my children? [...] Without education, it's very difficult to come up in life. If there is no education, even to travel to a nearby town also is not possible, because to get into the right bus, we need to be educated.

More than their limited access to employment of a more meaningful nature and their dependency on wage labour, this group of women experienced physical and psychological harm more often and is far more vulnerable to domestic violence than the Dalit women who completed their education. Sexual exploitation constitutes one of the key differences between the situation of Dalit women and men as patriarchy exists also within the Dalit community. That Dalit husbands “retaliate against their own oppressed position by perpetrating violence against their wives” (Sabharwal & Sonalkar 2015:68), sadly holds true for four out of twelve women in this study. And yet, they are not only afflicted with subordination stemming from patriarchy within the family, but also with caste related discrimination at their work places.

Their limited opportunities become obvious with regard to decision taking as well. Being shaped by the patriarchy around them, most women have not even thought about the possibility of taking decisions themselves:

[W]e cannot decide anything. Whatever he decides, we have to follow. We cannot decide anything against that. [...] We have to abide to his decision. We have to listen to his decision and follow only his decision, because he's a man. So, we cannot have a different idea to his decision. We have to listen and follow. That is how we have to run.

Interestingly, UW5 does not only speak of herself, but generalizes her experiences. Having been socialized in rural India, she believes her own situation to be true for all women and patriarchy to be the norm. The inferiority of women is anchored so deeply within her thinking, that it seems unlikely of her to ever seize opportunities that may lead her into more autonomy and independence.

The differences between the two groups of Dalit women are striking. The women who completed their school education reached, on average, decidedly higher levels of empowerment than the women who had to drop out of school. However, the results remain inconclusive to some extent as each set of interviewees includes women who

do not correspond with the general trend of their group. A woman's sense of agency can, for example, increase through education and the gaining of more knowledge. Yet, this increase may remain relative when looking at her influence within the family (compare, for example, EW4). At the same time, a woman's level of empowerment may not only increase through education but, at least partly, through personal misfortunes. UW2 for example had to take her spending decisions alone after her husband died. She also gained absolute freedom in her physical mobility as there was no one there to restrict her anymore. However, although UW2 complies with two main empowerment indicators, they do not seem to influence her well-being as she struggles with the burden of financial insecurity.

These findings support the view that empowerment is never an absolute but always a relative concept. It encompasses multifaceted, interrelated elements comprising knowledge, behaviour, values and relationships (Jupp et al. 2010:16). The empowerment process is never linear and "depends largely on experience gained from opportunities to exercise rights that are inherently context specific" (:16). Though overall trends are clearly recognisable and indicate a positive correlation between the successful completion of school education and the level of empowerment, still, each woman has to be looked at in consideration of her biography, her social standing, her family relations and her own sense of empowerment.

Identification of further factors that impact the empowerment of Dalit women

The analysis of the data through open, axial and selective coding revealed several further factors influencing the empowerment of Dalit women:

- The success of a woman's schooling career, and thus her empowerment, is decidedly influenced by her parents, namely their own educational level as well as their attitude and appreciation of school education in general. Other influencing factors, though not as strong, are family, neighbours and the educational institution itself.
- As shown in the data analysis, empowerment does not only require a set of assets at the individual level (like education, employment and health), but also at the collective level. Following Amartya Sen (1999:38-40) these include: political freedoms (e.g. uncensored speech and free elections), economic

facilities (opportunities for participation in trade and production), social opportunities (every arrangement society makes for education, health care etc.), transparency guarantees (freedoms that help to prevent corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings) and protective security (e.g. unemployment benefits and statutory income supplements, famine relief, emergency public employment etc.). In this study, two factors appear to be of particular relevance: improved social opportunities and protective security. Most probably, both factors would have benefited the uneducated women in their empowerment process. UW1 and UW3, for example, were not forced to discontinue their schooling but decided to take this step on their own, because they saw their parents' financial struggle. Statutory income supplements might have prevented their school dropout and the economic deprivation they both suffer from today. As their poverty affects their children in turn, improved social opportunities might very likely stop the negative downward trend of dependency and disempowerment. UW1, for instance, took her oldest daughter out of school – not because she did not value her education, but because of being incapable to afford the daily bus fare for her.

- Although empowerment is constrained by the political, economic and social opportunities that are available to a woman, her individual freedom is not solely constrained by external factors but “the institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of [her] freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities” (Sen 2000:5;31). There thus appears to be a need for increased exercise of individual freedoms. Only then, the respective lives can be improved and social arrangements made more effective and appropriate (:31).
- Traditional power relations and equations clearly need to be challenged more; not only in the mind-sets of women, but, more importantly, in those of men. Only if their attitudes concerning the inferiority of women are substantially and permanently changed, can the empowerment of women progress.

6.3 Methodological reflection

The following section gives a short presentation of additional discoveries that were made during the data analysis process. As seemingly insignificant particularities might have possibly influenced and even changed the ensuing process of the study's content and outcome, all possibly significant observations will be presented hereafter:

- During the process of open, axial and selective coding, it became clear that the impact of caste-related discrimination on the empowerment of Dalit women, one of the fundamental assumptions of this study, did not hold true. Only very few women reported about unreasonable disadvantages because of their caste. Instead, the categories "living in a patriarchal society" and "living in a collectivistic society" appeared to be of greater importance. As the data analysis progressed, their relevance with respect to the women's empowerment level became increasingly clear. Interestingly, the categories developed inductively and were not thought of beforehand. The questionnaire thus did not contain much questions concerning these topics and the information extracted remained limited.
- During the process of translating the interviews from Telegu and/or Tamil into English, differences in interview conduction between the researcher and the co-researcher appeared now and then. Though requests for modification were expressed by the researcher, not all of them were implemented and information might have gone lost. However, as both researchers hoped that the Dalit women would be less biased and more open to express their feelings in the presence of an Indian woman, the decision to let the co-researcher conduct the interviews outweighs the possible loss of information by far.
- A discovery made throughout most interviews conducted with the less educated Dalit women was that several of the questions appeared to be unclear to them, so that the co-researcher had to rephrase them several times during the interviews. However, as there was no discernible pattern in which questions were particularly unclear, the questionnaire was not changed.
- During open coding, the decision when and how to code sections remains, to some extent, subjective. This so called "competence of evaluation" (Helferrich 2009:37) is an intrinsic part of qualitative research and requires self-perception

and -observation. The researcher needs to be aware of (cultural) biases as well as his or her own subjectivity at all times, especially with regard to Western and Eurocentric perceptions. Coming from a highly individualistic culture, the evaluation of collectivistic world views holds the risk of subconscious biases. Although presumptions were reconsidered continuously, a completely unbiased analysis can never be guaranteed in qualitative research.

6.4 Recommendations for the field of practice

Based on the findings of this study, the following section provides recommendations for the field of practice:

- Though education is empowering for women on many levels, there still is a need for programmes that challenge traditional power relations and the inferior position of women in the Indian society as early as possible. Kindergartens and schools should implement corresponding programmes in their curriculum, addressing not only girls but, more importantly, boys as well. A one-sided approach is clearly insufficient as “the male dominated structure of the [Indian] society is the stumbling block on the way towards empowerment of women” (Biswas 2016:209)
- The government needs to improve its social opportunities and protective security in order to guarantee an increase in school enrolment rates, to prevent school-dropouts and to support families struggling financially.
- Beyond schooling, women need to be encouraged to actually exercise the freedoms they have. Participating in social choice and public decisions that impel the progress of economic, social and political opportunities continues to be the exception as most women feel unauthorized to do so. Programmes in and outside of school thus need to not only inform them about their rights but also encourage them to exercise them.

6.5 Topics for future studies

Although large parts of the research question could be answered in this study, several topics as well as newly emerged questions had to remain uncovered. Due to the limited scope of the study at hand, the following topics needed to be set aside for future research:

- An assessment of the present attitudes of Indian men (residing in rural and urban areas) towards the position of Dalit women, including an analysis of the origins of their attitudes and an identification of possible ways to challenge traditional mindsets.
- An analysis of the role of the teachers in the empowerment process of Dalit women. In how far do their attitudes towards empowerment impact the thinking of Dalit girls?
- A similar study with different school types might be of interest. As there is broad consent that learning effects in urban private schools are higher than in rural government schools³⁶, a direct comparison could offer further insights in ways to empower Dalit women.

6.6 Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was an investigation of the impact of secondary school education on the empowerment of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Although processes of social change and empowerment are never easy to measure (results being mostly elusive and difficult to evaluate), the findings of the study at hand show a positive correlation between education and empowerment. However, for empowerment to unfold its full effect, education clearly needs to exceed primary schooling. As suggested by Hanmer & Klugmann (2016) “completing secondary education and beyond has consistently large positive associations, underlining the importance of going beyond primary schooling” (:237). Dalit women who successfully completed secondary education comply with much more empowerment indicators than the women who had to drop out of school early: they manage to enter well-paid gainful

³⁶ See chapter 3.8 for more detailed information on this topic.

employment and are content with their work situation as well as with the way they are treated by their superiors; they achieve better living standards in comparison to their mothers; they marry later; their level of self-determination regarding their sexual rights and reproductive health increases; they do not experience intimate partner violence; they support voting and actively exercise their right to vote; they feel respected in their families and in the society and recognize their own worth; they are more comfortable in taking difficult decisions; they gain more courage to speak up and they show a slightly higher level of motivation to question regressive norms than the women who dropped out of school.

However, the completion of secondary school education helps dissolve deeply embedded social and patriarchal constructs only partly as traditional power relations between men and women are not questioned by the women. Moreover, an equal say over spending decisions within the family remains low. As “gender equality in education cannot be separated as a goal from gender equality in society as a whole” (Aikman & Unterhalter 2005:4), an increase in the quality of education in government schools seems to be inevitable. Ideally, this will not only foster the acquisition of knowledge, skills and critical thinking, but turn education into a transformative process which “promotes social change and contributes to building a just and democratic society. A quality education rejects gender discrimination and social injustice. Quality education cannot be achieved without gender equality and equity” (:4).

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APPENDIX

- A. Ethical Consent Form (English)
- B. Scans of the Ethical Consent Forms (Tamil) signed by all participants
- C. Semi-Structured Interviews: Interview guides in English and Tamil
- D. Semi-Structured Interviews: Transcripts